[illegible]

Critical Study on Selection from

FIFTEEN POETS

Containing

SPENSER ★ MILTON ★ DRYDEN
POPE & COWPER

with

(i) Lives & Works of Poets, (ii) Critical Essays on Poets, (iii) Introductions to the Poems, (iv) Central Ideas, (v) Summaries, (vi) Paraphrases, (vii) Notes and Explanations, (viii) Critical Appreciations, (ix) Points to Remember, (x) Recapitulatory Questions, (xi) Key Questions, (xii) General Important Questions, (xiii) University Questions.

for the

Students of English Literature

by

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M.A., M.O.L.

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"Read not to contradict and confute ; nor to believe and take for granted ; nor to find talk and discourse ; but to weigh and consider. Some books are to be tasted, other to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested. That is, some books are to be read, only in parts ; others to be read, but not curiously ; and some few to be read wholly, and with diligence and attention."

—*Francis Bacon*

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PREFACE

Glory be to that God who has, out of a drop of fluid, reated such a variety of Creatures, rational and irrational! ıdored be that Creator, who has established such a variety f forms, statures, and vocal sounds among them, though heir origin is the same pure, liquid, and genuine spirit.

In praise of the Prophet Muhammad a thousand salutaions and benedictions to his sublime Holiness Muhammad Mustafa, the Chosen,—the Blessing and Peace of God e with him. *Salla-l-tahu 'alahi*—through whose grace he Sacred Quran descended from the Most High! How nadequate is man justly to praise and eulogize Him! Salutation and blessing also to His Companions and posterity!

This little work seems scarcely to need the few words by way of Preface with which the writer has been asked by the Compilor to introduce it to his readers.

In this Book the Compilor has summarized, paraphrased and done the critical study of the following five well-known Poets of their time:—

1. Spenser.
2. Milton.
3. Dryden.
4. Pope.
5. Cowper.

The works of these Poets form part of the Elective Degree Course of the Punjab University. Even otherwise, the study of the works of these Poets in general, is very nteresting and important. The Compilor has concluded a ot in translating difficult phrases, describing the idioms and substituting the difficult words. In addition to this, he has discussed at length the history of English Poetry and has given useful information about the life of these Poets. The

critical appreciations of the poems and General Questions at the end of each poet's work will help the students to understand the prominent qualities of each poet. Further-more the key questions will also prove useful to examine the poems critically. Each summary has been followed by important recapitulatory questions which will definitely go a long way to increase the understanding and knowledge of the students.

I am confident that the students will find it a very useful handbook in their preparation of Degree Examination.

Nisbet Road
Lahore

(Dr.) A.S. Beg Timurie
Ph. D., M.R.A.S. (Lond.)

CONTENTS

ESSENTIAL STUDY OF ENGLISH POETRY

(1) DEFINITION OF POETRY

It is hard to give a clear cut definition of poetry and say ıat this kind of composition is poetry and all others prose. 'here are two aspects of it—the subject-matter and the form, ıat may have formed the basis for any such discrimination. ut these boundaries are fast fading. Many competent critics old that artist and men of letters who have never written a ne of poetry in the sense of rhymed verse are poets, because f their originality of thought, bold conceptions and emo- onal content of their writings. It will therefore suffice to ive what are the essential elements, the ingredients, that ıse together to give us the poetic effect.

The first and foremost quality is that the poet ives an emotional colouring to his material. His ttitude is entirely different from that of the scientist who epends upon his powers of observation and experiment and ries to give a faithfull account of the fact. But the poet goes eyond the realms of hard facts and with the power of nagination, with a heart palpitating with warmth and eeling, he presents the same scene or event in a new motional colouring. His eyes catch the beautiful hues, the ight and shades of nature; his ears are receptive to the music f the breezes and his heart throbs with the sufferings of ıuman beings. To Wordsworth ordinary objects of nature ıake an appeal which brings him in direct communion with ;od. For example, in his poem Nature he says that the rook and road were fellow travellers. He saw the great eights of the decaying woods, and heard the blasts of ıaterfalls :

> Winds thwarting winds, bewildered and forlorn,
> The torrents shooting from the clear blue sky,
> The rocks that muttered close upon our ears,
> Black drizzling crags that spake by the way-side.
> As if a voice were in them, the sick sight
> And giddy prospect of the raving stream,

The unfettered clouds and region of the Heavens,
Tumult and peace, the darkness and the light--
Were all like workings of one mind, the features
Of the same face, blossoms upon one tree.

Only a poet could have derived thoughts of Heavens from these common objects of Nature. For the mind of the scientist it is hard to imagine how winds could be bewildered and forlorn, nor can he hear a voice from rocks and drizzling crags.

The lines of verse are instinct with passion. The poet is carried by the impulse of the moment and he wants to record his novel experience, his reflection and wanderings of the mind, for his own personal delight as well as for the delight of others. It is as much a necessity for self-expression as to make others wiser.

Secondly, allied to this quality of emotion is the *richness of imaginatirn, wealth of detail, and enjoyment of beauty.* In this respect Keats is a typical representative, a votary of the beauties of objects of Nature and drinks deep at the fountain of sensual beauty. Like Shelley he also listens to the rich notes of the nightingale sitting in an orchard in the evening. He loads his stanzas with so much of colour, smell and tastes that as we read his Fancy we begin to see the colourful flowers. The following lines will serve as an illustration:

Thou shalt at one glance, behold
The daisy and the marigold;
White-plumed lilies, and the first
Hedge-grown primrose that hath burst.

Thirdly, although the poet is concerned with revealing the truth and representing nature or human nature faithfully it is yet *the subjective truth* and very seldom the objective truth that he records. He re-evaluates the world in the light of his own vision. He gives us his individual point of view peculiar to him. Poetry is the expression of souls burning with the passion of eternity, the prophets and seers who have heard "the still, sad music of humanity."

They have looked at the problems of the world each from his own angle of vision and expressed it in a form suited to the thought. Wordsworth is the high priest of Nature and reads a heavenly message from wild flowers, brooks and streams :

> "To me the meanest of flowers that blows can give
> Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears."

Shelley is a visionary who sees the shadows of an unseen Power visiting all objects and the minds of men touching them with a sense of immortality for a short while and then suddenly vanishing. In his *Hymn to Intellectual Beauty* he says :

> Love, hope, and self-esteem, like clouds depart.
> And come, for some uncertain moments lent,
> Man were immortal and omnipotent,
> Didst thou, unknown and awful as thou art,
> Keep with thy glorious train firm state within his heart.
> Thou messenger of sympathies
> That wax and wane in lovers' eyes.

Similarly, Browning is an optimist and sees a ray of hope in every disappointed effort; Tennyson is a disillu-s ioned man, bird caught in a glass cage, beating its wings to come out; Arnold is deeply struck with the melancholy side of life ; Byron echoes the thunder and lightning and the storms that burst within his soul—illustrations for all these can be easily multiplied.

Fourthly, poetry is characterized by a certain regularity of cadence, a rise and fall in the sound, a swing much like the marching of soldiers or beating of the drum. This *rhythm* in the lines of poetry distinguishes it from prose and makes a special appeal to the human soul.

This sense of harmony is also a special feature of other branches of art like music, painting, dancing and architecture,—all of which make use of symmetry, proportion, regularity of sound and movement of feet as the chief

ingredients that contribute to their perfection and give delight to the human soul. When rhythm is carried a step further and under the guidance of the rules of prosody lines are made to have an equal number of feet or give the same sound at the end, *e.g.*, the first with the second, the third with the fourth, or the first with the third and second with the fourth and so on, the verses form a definite **rhyme scheme**. Examine the following stanza from Gray:

> The curfew tolls the knell of parting day,
> The lowing herd wind slowly o'er the lea,
> The ploughman homeward plods his weary way,
> And leaves the world to darkness and to me.

As further aids to harmony of sounds poets sometimes make use of **alliteration,** a repetition of the same sound. By the richness of sound the poet produces an effect in the ear and if we read the lines aloud it gives a special delight.

Fifthly, it must not be presumed that *subject-matter* of poetry is always concerned with the destinies of man with the high-flown philosophic problems that baffle him at every step of his life and that the poet aims at solving some of these mysteries. Though Pope believed that

> 'The proper study of mankind is man'

yet the fact remains that no subject is trivial or too high for the poet. He writes on every conceivable topic under the sun and creates an interest in the reader's mind. Poems have been written on art and painting, in memory of friends, on roses, fly drinking out of the cup, a solitary reaper, a rustic highland girl, a king, a beggar, the moon, the starry nights, dreams and fancies, nightingales and skylarks. Byron choose to inspire the Greeks, Shelley addresses Pan, god of the forests. Keats roams in imagination over the scenes of nature in *Fancy*, and Browning looks with confidence to the struggle of Death. Thus the range of poetry is as vast and limitless as the ever-expanding horizon.

Functions and uses of Poetry. From these fundamentals of poetry we may now turn to the function of poetry and how it ministers to the needs of the human soul.

As hinted above, the various poets have adopted different roles. Some have been conscious of a high mission, as Shelley remarks :

"Poets are the unacknowledged legislators of mankind". Others agree with Arnold that poetry adds culture, sweetness and light and it is "at bottom a criticism of life." Robert Browning asserted that like newspaper correspondent the poet records everything ; but he does not only make a plain statement of facts ; he gives his own commentary in each case and draws his own conclusions. He sets up the standards and creates value in life. He enables us to make correct judgments and if the popular taste is going astray it is the duty of the poet to recreate it rather than cater to what the public demands.

Consequently, **poetry** serves several ends in life and **is useful in various ways. It has got the healing power ; it consoles the mind,** brings peace and tranquillity to the troubled soul and gives a lesson of enduring the hard responsibilities of life. The message of the mature minds expressed in a beautiful and appealing language soothes pain, and fortifies the soul. The following few stanzas will illustrate this :

(1) Shakespeare informs us that there is a silver lining to every dark cloud in these lines :

> Sweet are the uses of adversity,
> Which, like the toad, ugly and venomous,
> Wears yet a precious jewel in his head.

(2) Browning says that over and above this ephemeral world there are spiritual values which will endure :

> There shall never be one lost good ! What was, shall live as before ;
> The evil is null, is nought, is silence implying sound ;
> What was good shall be good, with, for evil, so much good more ;
> On the earth the broken arcs, in the heaven, a perfect round.

Poetry creates a keen interest in life, a zest for life, so to say, a sympathy for the sufferings of human beings and **a keen sense of enjoyment of the beauties of nature,** as well as a sense of kinship with it. The poets ponder at the tragedy of human life, philosophise and contemplate and then express the results of their mature thoughts in the form of verse. This kind of experience does not depend upon power of reasoning on which the scientist or the philosopher depends, but it is a mystical experience inspired by the intuitive faculty. Greeks believed that when a poet writes beautiful verse he is inspired, meaning that he is for the time being under the influence of a supernatural power. So the poets attempt to probe into the mystery of life and to rise higher than the apparent failures. They inspire an attitude of never-failing attempt irrespective of the fruits. (How conspicuously this message runs through the poetry of Iqbal).

Further, **poets entertain dreams of a golden age**; some of them look back to a golden era that has passed, while others create Utopias for the future. Keats drunk deep from the fountain of Hellas (Greece) and the past glory of Greek kindles thoughts in him that inspire his whole being. Shelley promises a revival of the greatness of Greek culture and the dawn of an era of goodness, nobility and happiness in general, as he expresses in *The World's Great Age Begins Anew*.

Another use of poetry is that when we feel dull and tired we open a book of poems **to find delight** in it. In a sad moment it helps us to endure life and while we are in a pleasant mood it adds spice to that pleasure. With the exception of a few poets, like Browning, who are obscure, most of them aim at giving joy to the reader in addition to giving him instruction. The regular beat of the sound, the rhythm of the lines of verse, the rhyme, assonance and alliteration are all devices to infuse a pleasantness of effect.

Last, but not least, **poets convey message of high moral truths**. They probe into the mysteries of life and death which they unravel for the good of the reader. They arrive at valuable conclusions which are beyond the pale of reason.

There is a tone of moral earnestness and a lofty seriousness of purpose in the poetry of Wordsworth, for example. There is an outburst of optimism, a faith in the ultimate victory of good over the evil, in Browning. And there are the poems in this selection on Character of the Happy Warrior and Integer Vital, which inspire noble sentiments. Thus, the poets have got a conciousness that 'they are prophets.'

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(2) FORMS OF POETRY

The Ballad. The earliest form of English poetry is the ballad. Much before the days of printing, wandering singers or minstrels travelled from place to place, singing songs about famous heroes and heroines and their battles and adventures. Such songs or narrative are called **ballads**. They are, in fact, stories in verse. Now-a-days stories are told in books, plays or films, but in the past they were sung by singers and learnt by heart and passed down from generatton to generation till man invented a way of writing and they were written down and preserved. They are remarkable for their rhythm, singing tone, their adaptability to music and dancing, their loveliness and vitality. Their main subjects are adventures, battles, feats of strength and they even take up love, hate or pity for their stories. They are also marked for their directness and simplicity. With the passage of time the ballad form changes with modifications. Coleridge's *Christabel* is a ballad.

The Lyric. Lyric poetry is closely allied with music and the word comes from the Greek instrument of music, *the lyre*, to the accompaniment of which these poems were sung. In these the poet is chiefly concerned with his own feelings and wants the reader to share his passions and emotions. Though lyrics are mostly personal yet there are really very noble and sweet lyrics which embody the most universal feelings and experiences of human soul.

"Lyrical poetry is a poetry in its highest, intensest and purest form as in it the poet sings of emotions which constitute the very life—of love, fear, joy, anger, hope and devotion. Owing to the elementary human emotions with which it deals, the appeal of lyric poetry is universal.

There is no human breast which does not beat with joys over success in life, or get depressed over failures and we all like to have our experiences portrayed by artists and sung by poets in beautiful and musical language. Owing to magical cadence, lyric poetry possesses a haunting loveliness which seems to remove us from the sordid surroundings of this earthly existence and to lift us to a higher plane. The chief characteristics of lyric poetry are :

(1) Subjective character (2) Unity of theme (3) Spontaneity (4) Emotional intensity and (5) Brevity.

The earliest lyric poetry required the accompaniment of harp, and the lyric poetry has retained in varying degrees qualities of song. It is true that many lyrics cannot be set to music, but they all have a verbal melody. European languages soon developed several types of poetry which although differing from the true lyric in several important respects, partook in a lesser or greater degree of the chief characteristic of the true lyric—melody and spontaneity. These were termed sonnets, odes, elegies, etc. They are now all included in the lyric poetry. And it became a generally accepted principle that all poetry having verbal music, spontaneity and unity of theme, can be regarded as lyric poetry.

It resembles the early Ballads in form and rhythm but what makes it different from a Ballad is the fact that lyric lacks the interests of a story and conveys a great thought or a hidden meaning in a short, simple and musical composition."

The Ode. An ode is a form of rhymed lyric and is often in the form of an address, *e.g.*, Collins' *Ode to Evening*; Keats' *Ode To Autumn*, and so on. In subject, feeling any style, it is exalted and sublime. It may be regular or irregular, with or without a chorus.

The Sonnet. It may be called an artificial form of subjective poetry. It is intricate in structure and lacks the spontaneity and simplicity of a lyric. Its most remarkable characteristic is that its ideas are very closely put together

and due to this it is often difficult to understand sonnets. They are often used to convey a feeling or a number of ideas closely connected with one another; hence every line and phrase has to contribute towards the full expression of the poet's meaning.

The sonnet consists of fourteen lines (*i.e.*, rhyme together). It has two parts, the octave and the sestet, the first comprising of eight and the second six lines. The idea, emotion or mood is unfolded in the octave and developed or completed in the sestet.

This form of poetry was invented in the 13th century by an Italian poet and adopted by Dante and Petrarch. It was introduced into English poetry by Wyatt and Surrey. Sir Philip Sydney, Shakespeare, Spenser, Milton and Wordsworth adopted this form and wrote a number of sonnets.

The sonnet falls into two types, the first one being Petrarchan (after the name of the Italian poet) and the second one English which can be further subdivided into Shakespearian and Spenserian.

The Elegy. It is a song of mourning giving expression to personal grief of the poet for another person. Sometimes the writer adopts this form to give vent to his sorrow and also to pay homage to the memory of the passed away bringing out the great qualities that he possessed and the achievements he made while alive. Gray's Elegy ***Written in a Country Churchyard*** is an example.

The elegy sometimes becomes the vehicle of thoughtful speculation, philosophical reflections and contemplation over the deepest problems of life, and at times it is used as a mode of literary criticism. Shelley's ***Adonais*** and Tennyson's ***In Memoriam*** are examples of the first and Arnold's ***Memoriam Verses*** of the second type. There are also elegies in which there is no expression of grief for the dead though there is a strain of melancholy and also a reflective atmosphere.

The Epic. Like the ballad the epics are also of a very old standing. They are the national poems narrating the

adventures and exploits of a hero. There are two classes of it—the epic of growth and the epic of art. The first type is the which is a collection of several ballads clustering round one personality of a great hero or a number of ballads on the same theme combined together. Homer's *Illiad* is an example of this. Epic of art is produced by a single poet, *e.g.*, Milton's *Paradise Lost* and Dante's *Divine Comedy*.

The Dramatic Monologues. A dramatic monologue is the half-way form between drama and soliloquy of lyric. It is a revelation of character, mental states or moral crises of the person who speaks. As Phelps points out, it is neither a meditation nor a soliloquy ; it is a series of remarks usually confessional, addressed either orally or in the form of a letter to another person or to a group of listeners. These other figures, though they do not speak, are necessary to the understanding of the monologue ; we often see them plainly, and see their faces change in expression as the monologue advances. This species of verse is perhaps the highest form of poetic art, as it is also the most difficult, for with no stage setting, no descriptions, no breaks in the conversation, the depths of the human heart are exposed.

Browning is a master in this field. He takes a certain critical moment in one person's life, and by permitting the individual to speak his character, the whole course of his existence, and sometimes the spirit of an entire period in the world's history, are revealed in a brilliant searchlight. His *Abt Vogler* is an example of this.

(3) FIGURES OF SPEECH AND LITERARY TERMS

(*i*) **Simile**. Whenever the poet wants to make an idea clear or emphasize a point, or he intends to ornament his style of writing he does so by comparing the thing in question to some other thing. For example he wants to stress the patted whiteness of the brow of a lady ; he will call it 'white as a lily,' or he wants to bring out the brightness of a certain object, he will call it 'bright as gold' or 'bright as the sun'. This is simile and as we read the poems of different poets we realise that similes are freely used in poetry.

For Example :

She is the Rose, the glorie of the day,
And mine the Primrose in the lowly shade,
Mine, ah not mine ; amisse I mine did say :
Not mine but his, which mine awhile her made :
Mine to be his, with him to liue for ay :
O that so faire a flower so soone should fade,
And through vntimely tempest fall away.

[Lament for Daphmaida —Spenser].

(ii) **Metaphor.** A metaphor is also a form of comparison but in this case we do not use the word 'like' or 'as' ; instead of this we identify one thing with another or call a thing by another name. For exemple, 'Changhiz Khan was a lion' ; we call him a lion because we want to emphasize his courage and fierceness ; we could also say 'Changhis Khan was a brave as a lion' but thenit become a simile. Like similes, metaphors are also used by poets to decorate their poetry and heighten the effect.

Example :-

O wild West Wild, thou breath of Autumn's being,
Thus from whose unseen presence the leaves dead
Are driven, like ghosts from an enchanter fleeing.

[Ode to the West Wind]

(iii) **Imagery.** Imagery is of two types—verbal and visual; verbal imagery stands for sound-pictures and visual imagery for word-pictures. Just as a painter uses his colour to draw pictures, similarly a poet has words or phrases to do so. A word-picture is a phrase, a line or a passage which calls up to our mind a clear picture of a person, place, scene, or action. The picture may be distinct or indistinct; when it comes very clearly before our mind's eyes we call it a vivid picture. As for the sound-picture, it is also a phrase or line which appeals to our sense of hearing and is musical or rhythmical.

For Example :

Happy, happy, happy pair!
None but the brave,
None but the brave,
None but the brave deserves the fair.

[from Alexender's Feast—Dryden]

O sweet and far, from cliff and scar
The horns of Elfland faintly blowing !
[Blow, Bugle, Blow]

(iv) **Rhyme**. This is often used in poetry at the end of lines although we find some of the greatest poems without it. It is the name given to the likeness between the sound of two words, *e.g.*, 'part and 'art' 'guides' and 'ides' etc. The use of rhyme creates music in poetry.

For Example :

That from beneath the seat of jove doth spring,
Begin, and somewhat loudly sweep the string.
Hence with denial vain, and coy excuse,
So may some gentle Muse.
[from Milton's Lycidas]

(v) **Heroic Couplet**. A pair of lines rhyming together. This metre was in vogue in the 18th century. Pope's poetry serves as an exemple. Usually each line has ten syllables with the accent falling on the second syllable, *e.g.*,

What dire offence from am'rous causes springs.
What mighty quarrels rise from travial thing. [Pope]

(vi) **Blank Verse**. Generally it is ten syllables in length, The accent falls on the second syllable of a foot and there are no rhymes. Poets permit themselves considerable latitude in varying the position of the accent, the pause and the length of a line. The poetry of Shakespeare and Milton shows best examples.

(vii) **Alliteration**. A repetition of the same initial sound in the words placed near each other in a line of verse, *e.g.*,

'Nor cast one longing ling'ring look behind.'

(viii) **Conceit**. It is a term applied to "strained or far-fetched literary comparison." It was employed by the metaphysical poets of the seventeenth century like Donne

and Cowley for ornamental purposes. It was looked down by critics like Dryden and Dr. Johnson and this term was applied by them in contempt and as a word of reproach. It was a common trick of literature with the Elizabethans, likes Shakespeare, Lyly, etc. But there is a difference in handling by them and the metaphysical poets, while "the Elizabethan conceits were commonly in the nature of ornamentation, the metaphysical conceits arose from the intellectual process of thinking in figures." During the classical period "conceit was despised, the 19th century romantics never thought of employing it, but it has again been revived by some of the moderns like T. S. Eliot, etc.

(4) A BRIEF HISTORY OF ENGLISH POETRY

(a) Before the age of Elizabeth—1745

(i) Anglo-Saxon Poetry.—A considerable body of Anglo-Saxon poetry has been preserved including the earliest epic in the English language, *viz.*, Beowulf. It tells with rude vigour of the mighty feats of the hero whose name it bears. Of the authorship of Beowulf nothing is known, and its history is still a matter of controversy. Like all Anglo-Saxon poetry, Beowulf employs beginning rhyme, that is, the regular and emphatic repetition of the same letter.

(ii) Chaucer and England.—The first of the really English national poets was Chaucer (1340-1400). He deliberately chose as the language of his poetry though he freely borrowed rhyme, metre, and even stanza-forms from French and Italian poetry. Chaucer is called the father of English poetry. Chaucer's most famous and characteristic work is "The Canterbury Tales." It is a collection of stories fitted into a general frame-work which serves to hold them together. The material of Chaucer's Tales is borrowed from various sources—Latin, French and Italian. "But whatever he borrows he makes entirely his own, and he remains one of the most delightful of English story-tellers in verse." The great bulk of the Canterbury Tales is written in the heroic couplet which Chaucer borrowed from the French.

"Chaucer," says Hudson, "was not in any sense a poet of the people. He was a court poet, who wrote for the cultured readers and refined society. The great vital issue of the day never inspired his verse. He made his appeal to an audience composed of the favoured few, who wanted to be amused by comedy, or touched by pathos, or moved by romantic sentiment, but who did not wish to be disturbed by painful reminders of plagues, famines and popular discontent." It was left to William Langland (1330-1400) to give expression to the misery of the masses. Langland was essentially a poet of the people. He was an ardent champion of the popular cause. His 'Vision of Piers Plawman' though written on the Anglo-Saxon principle of alliteration and with little literary value, had a wonderful effect in rousing the masses.

(iii) From Chaucer to Spenser.—For a century and a half after the death of Chaucer no great poet appeared in England. Lydgate (1370-1451) and a few others only produced imitations of Chaucer. Their work does not deserve much notice. The Scottish poets of the period, though the influence of Chaucer was very marked even in their poetry, showed praiseworthy spirit of originality. Barbour, a contemporary of Chaucer, wrote his famous national epic called "The Bruce". Dunber (1465-1530) wrote several poems, but in his 'Dance by the seven Deadly Sins' there is a combination of vigour, broad humour, and homely pathos. Other Scottish poets of note were King James I, Henryson and Douglas.

In 1557 appeared the first collections of miscellaneous English poems (Wyatt and Surrey). To them belongs the credit of introducing into English poetry the sonnet and blank verse which in the hands of Shakespeare and Milton were used to produce the world's masterpieces.

(b) The age of Elizabeth

"The Age of Elizabeth was a time of intellectual liberty, of growing intelligence and comfort among all classes of unbounded patriotism and of peace at home and abroad." The Renaissance had aroused the intellect and

aesthetic faculties of Englishmen while the Reformation had awakened their spiritual nature. "The Renaissance enabled man," as Lamartine remarks, "to discover himself and the universe". Under its influence he, as Taine says, "suddenly opened his eyes and saw that the printing press did its part in diffusing knowledge." At the same time, the discovery of new worlds beyond the seas, and the thrilling tales brought home by daring explorers "quickened popular curiosity and the zest of adventure, kindled fresh ideas about many things and did much to enlarge the boundaries of men's minds". It was, in fact, an age in which "Men lived intensely, thought intensely, and wrote intensely."

Such a stage of "great thought and great action" found expression in literature and led to wonderful literary outburst. The age was ripe for drama which was soon brought to the highest stage of its development. But the age also produced some non-dramatic poets whose work deserves the highest praise. It was an age of lyrics and songs and sonnets. The sonnet introduced into English, as we have seen, by Wyatt and Surrey, at once established itself among the recognised forms of English poetry. The sonnet gave a chance to Shakespeare and others to give expression to the movements and fluctuations of their passion in immortal verse.

The greatest non-dramatic poet of the age was Edmund Spenser who, besides other poems, wrote the 'Faery Queene'. The Faery Quenne, "one of the longest as well as one of the greatest of English poems," is an allegorical romance, full of wonderful pictures and a noble moral spirit. It is written in the Nine-line stanza, rhyming a b a b b c b c c which has ever since been associated with Spenser's name. Spenser had been called the "poets' poet," because other poets, like Milton and Keats, have learnt from him much of their craft.

The poets (and the dramatists) of the age of Elizabeth were essentially romantic in their outlook, full of the spirit of wonder. Their poetry resounds with acclamation of the wonder and romance of life and enthusiasm for its loveliness.

(c) The Puritan age (1620-1660)

(i) The Metaphysical Poets.—After the death of Elizabeth, a period of decline in English poetry set in. The romantic impulse began to wane. Men took their fancies into extreme realms ; their language became affected and thus insincere. Poetry was no longer an escape from life, but an interpretation of it, a means for speculation rather than wonder.

The men who wrote this new kind of poetry have been called "Metaphysical" poets. It was Dr. Johnson who gave them this name. The "Metaphysical poets", according to Johnson, "were men of learning, and to show their learning was their whole endeavour—They neither copied nature nor life...Their thoughts often new, but seldom natural." Their work is packed with affectations and conceits. Their poetry takes its origin from the brain and not from the heart. It is the product of intellect rather than imagination. It lacks the spontaneity of the Elizabethans. The chief poets of this school were Donne, Herbert, Cowley, Crashaw and Vaughan.

(ii) Milton.—Milton (1608—1674) is the only great poet of this period. He has nothing in common with the Metaphysical poets except his deep religious feeling. Milton's work is a blend of classicism and romanticism. It shows a wonderful union of intellectual power and creative power, both at their highest. His 'Paradise Lost' the greatest epic in the English language, shows the wonderful control Milton had over his medium of words. It is written in blank verse, of which measure Milton remains the greatest master.

(d) Classical Poetry (1660-1745)

(i) The Age of Dryden (1660-1700).—With the Restoration another change came over English poetry. It lost its moral strength and spiritual fervour. It became devoid of real earnestness of purpose, and with this of strong passion and great creative energy. "The thoughts of men," says Hudson, "no longer sealed the heights ; they moved

along the plain." The poet did not allow his thoughts to wander off with Spenser into fairyland, or to explore with Milton the mysteries of heaven and hell. He made his verse the vehicle of argument, controversy, personal and political satire.

Dryden and Pope were the two chief classical poets in English poetry. Dryden was a great master of letters, versatile, widely read and thoughtful. In the words of Matthew Arnold, "He was the quissant and glorious founder, and Pope the splendid high priest, of an age of prose and reason. Dryden wrote poetry as well as drama and prose. His poetry is thoroughly representative of the age. As a whole it lacks the essentially poetic qualities. It has little imaginative powers, little depth of feeling, little spiritual glow and except here and there, it rarely touches a high lyrical note." The best known Dryden's poems are *Absalom and Achitophel*, a powerful satire, and *Alexander's Feast* one of the best odes in English. Dryden's great contribution to English poetry was the establishment of the heroic couplet as the fashion for satiric.

(ii) The Age of Pope (1900-1745).—Pope had neither the imaginative nor the depth of feeling without which great poetry is impossible. Nor was he a great thinker. But as a literary craftsman, the heroic couplet was perfected in his hands. Poetry was limited in his age; there were few lyrics, little or no love poetry, no epics or song of nature. But in the narrow field of satiric and didactic verse, Pope was the undisputed master. A few of Pope's best known poems are "The Rape of the Lock," "The Essay on Man."

Important Questions

1. **Write a note on two of the following:**
   (*i*) Allegory
   (*ii*) Heroic couplet
   (*iii*) Pastoral Elegy (P.U. 1971)
2. **Give the following literary Terms with example:**
   (*i*) Sonnet. (*ii*) Epic (*iii*) Simile (*iv*) Metaphor (*v*) Imagery and (*vi*) Blank Verse.

MILTON—(1708-74).

Life and works :

The introductory note on "*Milton.*" Please see *Life and Works* from "*Poetical Selection of fifteen Poets*" on Page 32, a very important note for the critical study on *Milton*.

1. ON THE MORNING OF CHRIST'S NATIVITY

(1) Summary

According to the sayings and prophesies of holy men, Christ was born on a winter night. He put off his glorious garb of light and adopted human form to work the deliverance of mankind from sins. With his arrival universal peace ushered in, and truth, justice and mercy began the practice of men. The oracles fell dumb and the false gods like Lars and Lemures, Peor and Baalim, Hammon and Moloch forsook their temples and fled in terror. This was the miracle of his birth, but he worked the redemption of mankind by glorifying both himself and humanity at large on suffering the crucifixion.

(2) Paraphrase

Stanza 1. (Lines 1—8) : It was the wild winter while the heaven-born Child lies (lay) all meanly wrapt in the rude manger. Nature (was) in awe to him, (and) so to sympathise with her great Master, had doff'd her gaudy trim. It was then no season for her to wanton with the sun, her lusty paramour.

Stanza 2. (Lines 9—16) : Confounded that her Maker's eyes should look upon her foul deformities so near, she only wooes the gentle air with fair speeches to hide her guilty naked shame polluted with sinful blame.

Stanza 3. (Line 16—24) : But to cease her fears, He sent down the meek-eyed Peace. She (*i.e.*, Peace), His ready harbinger, crown'd with olive green, came softly sliding down through the turning sphere, dividing the amorous clouds with turtle wings, and waving wide her myrtle wand, she strikes a universal peace through sea and land.

Stanza 4. (Lines 24—32). No war, or battle's sound was heard around the world. The trumpet spake not to the armed throng; the shield and spear were hung high up, and the hooked chariot stood unstained with hostile blood. And kings sat still will awful eye as if they knew surely their sovran Lord was (near) by.

Stanza 5. (Lines 33—40). But the night wherein the Prince of Light's reign of peace began upon the earth, was peaceful. The winds, with wonder whist kissed the waters smoothly whispering new joys to the mild Ocean, who hath now quite forgot to rave; while birds of calm sit brooding on the charm'd wave.

Stanza 6. (Lines 41—48): The stars, with deep amaze, stand fixed in steadfast gaze, bending their precious influence one way, and will not take their flight (even) for all the morning light or Lucifer that often warned them thence. But they did glow in their glimmering orbs until their Lord himself bespake, and bid them go.

Stanza 7. (Lines 49—56): And though the shady gloom had given room (to) day, the sun himself withheld his wonted speed and hid his head for shame, as the new-enlightened world should no more need his inferior flame. He (the sun) saw a greater Sun (Christ) appear than his bright throne or burning axletree could bear.

Stanza 8. (Lines 57—64): The shepherds on the lawn, ere the point of dawn, sat simply chatting in a rustic row. They thought than (then) full little that the mighty Pan (*i.e.*, Christ) was kindly come to live with them below. Perhaps their loves, or else their sheep, was all that did keep so busy their silly thoughts.

Stanza 9. (Lines 65—72): When such sweet music (of) divinely-warbled voice answering the stringed noise as was never strook by mortal finger, did greet their hearts and ears, (it) took all their souls in blisful rapture. The air, loth to lose such pleasure still prolongs each heavenly close with thousand echoes.

Stanza 10. (Lines 73—80) : Nature that heard such sound thrilling the aery region beneath the hollow round of Cynthia's scat, was now almost won to think (that) her part was done, and that her reign had its last fulfilling here. She knew (that) such harmony alone could hold all heaven and earth in happier union.

Stanza 11. (Lines 81—88) : At last, a globe of circular light—that with long beams array'd the shame-faced night—surrounds their sight. The helmed Cherubim and sworded Seraphim are seen with wings display'd in glittering ranks harping to Heaven's new-born Heir with inexpressive notes in loud and solemn quire.

Stanza 12. (Lines 89—96) : Such music (as 'tis said said) was never made before, but when of old the Sons of Morning sung while the great Creator set His constellations and hung the well-balanced world on hinges, and cast deep the dark foundations and bid the weltering waves (to) keep their oozy channel.

Stanza 13. (Lines 97—104): Ring out, ye crystal spheres, bless once our human ears if ye have power to touch our senses so. And let your silver chime move in melodious time; and let the bass of heaven's deep organ blow; and with your nine-fold harmony make up full consort to the angelic symphony.

Stanza 14. (Lines 105—112): For if such holy song enwraps our fancy long, Time will run back, and fetch the age of gold. And speckled Vanity will soon sicken and die, and leprous Sin will melt from earthly mould; and Hell itself will pass away and leave her dolorous mansions to the peering day.

Stanza 15. (Lines 113—122): Yes, Truth and Justice will then turn down to men orb'd in a rainbow; and Mercy will sit throned between them, wearing like glories in celestial sheen (and) steering down the tissued clouds with radiant feet. And heaven, as at some festival, will open wide the gates of her high palace-hall.

Stanza 16. (Lines 123—130): But wisett Fate says, No this must not yet be so, (for) the Babe yet lies in smiling infancy, that on the bitter cross (He) must redeem our loss so (as) to glorify both Himself and us. Yet, first to those chain'd in sleep, the wakeful trump of doom must thunder through the deep.

Stanza 17. (Lines 131—138): When at the world's last session, the dreadfull Judge shall spread His throne in middle air, while the red fire and smouldering clouds out-break, the aged Earth shall, with such a horrid clang as rang on Mount Sinai, shake from the surface to the centre aghast with terror of that blast.

Stanza 18. (Lines 139—146): And then at last our bliss (which) is full and perfect (though) but begins now, for from this happy day the old underground Dragon bound in straiter limits casts not half so far his usurped sway, and wroth to see his kingdom fail, swindges the scaly horror of his folded tail.

Stanza 19. (Lines 147—154) : The Oracles are dumb; no voice or hideous hum runs through the arched roof in deceiving words. Apollo can no more divine from his shrine, (and) (is) leaving the steep of Delphos with hollow shriek. No mighty trance, or breathed spell inspires the pale-eyed priest from the prophetic cell.

Stanza 20. (Lines 155—162): A voice of weeping and loud lament (was) heard over the lonely mountains and the resounding shore. From haunted spring and dale edged with pale poplar, the parting Genius is sent with sighing. The Nymphs with torn flower-inwoven tresses mourn in twilight shade of tangled thickets.

Stanza 21. (163—170) : The Lars and Lemures moan with midnight plaint in consecrated earth and on the holy hearth. A drear and dying sound in urns and round altars affrights the Flamens at their quaint service. And the chill marble seems to sweat while each peculiar Power forgoes his wonted seat.

Stanza 22. (Lines 171—178) Peor and Baalim forsake their dim temples with that twice-batter'd god of

Palestine; And mooned Ashtaroth both Heaven's queen and mother now sits not girt with Tapers' holy shine. The Libyc Hammon shrinks his horn, (and) the Tyrian maids in vain mourn their wounded Thammuz.

Stanza 23. (Lines 179—188) : And sullen Moloch fled, (and) hath left burning in shadows dread his idol all of blackest hue. In vain with cymbal's ring they call the grisly king in dismal dance about the blue furnace, (and) Isis, and Orus, and the dog Anubis, the brutish gods of Nile haste as fast.

Stanza 24. (Lines 189—196) : Nor is Osiris seen in Memphian grove, or green trampling the unshower'd grass with loud lowings. Nor can he be at rest within the sacred chest; naught but profoundest Hell can be his shroud. In vain the sabl-stoled sorceress bears his worshiped ark with dark timbrell'd anthems.

Stanza 25. (Lines 197—204): He feels the dreaded Infant's hand from Juda's land. The rays of Bethlehem blind his dusky eyes, nor all the gods beside dare abide longer, not huge Typhone ending in snaky twine. Our Babe, to show his true Godhead, can control the dammed crew in his swaddling bands.

Stanza 26. (Lines 205—212): So, when the sun in bed,—curtained with cloudy red—pillows his chin upon an orient wave, the pale flocking shadows troop to the infernal jail, (and) each fetter'd ghost slips to his several grave. And the yellow-skirted fays fly after the night-steeds leaving their moon-loved maze.

Stanza 27. (Lines 212—219) : But see the blest Virgin hath laid her Babe to rest. (It) is time, our tedious song should have ending here. Heaven's youngest-teemed star has fixed her polished car, (and is) attending the sleeping Lord with hand lamp. And all about the courtly stable bright-harnessed angels sit in serviceable order.

(3) Critical Appreciation

Please see the Key Questions at the end.

(4) Recapitulatory Question

Q. 1. Write a note on Milton's early poems characteristics having his poem "On Morning of Christ Nativity" in your mind and illustrate how far he was influenced by the old poets.

Ans. Please see "Key Questions" as above mentioned.

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2. ON HIS TWENTY-THIRD BIRTHDAY

(1) Summery

Milton says that his best twenty-three of youth have gone away, but out of this spring of youth there is no outcome of any flowers or plants. He thinks that perhaps his outward appearance hide the truth, because in the eye of the world he has become mature and ripe but spiritually he is still of inferior stuff. But he is not sad on his unripeness of spirit, but instead accepts it, because this immaturity has been brought by the time under the directions of Almight God. God himself will provide this maturity of spirit with the passage of time.

(2) Paraphrase

Youth is considered the best period of life, because in this age man's five senses are at their supreme. In this age man can conquer the entire world. After this age decay in every limb of body begins to occur. They become weak and become incapable of performing their functions properly. So youth has been considered the most appropriate time when man can show wonders, because upto that period he is mature in all respect. Milton also contemplates on this idea and thinks that he is still immature at such a period when he should not.

But he at the same time is an orthodox puritan, and well versed with Bible and other religious books. He learns from the study of these religious books that the will of the God governs the entire world. No man can achieve greatness without his accord. If he is still immature and spiritually not upto the standard, it is due to the

fact that the grace of God does not wish him to be so. So he accepts this immaturity as a thing bestowed by heaven. If God will desire, He will himself bring spiritual perfectness with the passage of time and a time can still come when by the grace of God he may attain the spiritual greatness.

(3) Recapitulatory Questions

Q. 1. "Man does not become mature with the passage of time." Discuss in the light of poem.

Q. 2. "The man's intellect is governed by the will of God." Comment on these lines with reference to poem.

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3. L'ALLEGRO

(1) Introduction to the Poem

The two poems *L'Allegro* and '*Il Penseroso*' present a contrast between two different moods—one of mirth (joy) and the other of melancholy (sadness). Milton seems to have borrowed the idea of contrast between these two dispositions from a forgotten poem prefixed to the first edition of Burton's "Anatomies of Melancholy" entitled. "The Author's Abstract of Melancholy, or a Dialogue between Pleasure and Pain." An immortal poet, he was widely-read scholar and might have been indebted to various writers for certain of his sentiments and images but that does not, in any way, detract from the greatness of his work. "The date of these two poems has not been ascertained ; but it seems probable that these two enchanting pictures of rural life, and of the diversified delights arising from a contemperative mind, were composed at Horton" to which place Milton went to reside with his father in 1632 and where he stayed at least for five years.

In *L'Allegro*, the poet bids melancholy to leave him and calls upon the spirit of Mirth to fill his heart with joy and to allow him to become its devotee. Then follows a lively description of the morning with the coming of which activity wakes up in the animal and the human world and

the hills and the woods and all the beautiful objects of the countryside are steeped in the splendour and freshness of the glorious dawn. The young and the old come forth to play on a sunny day and life's activities go on till the night approaches and brings the thought of sweet rest with it. The poet asks Mirth to give him all the delights of merry sights and lovely music so that care and anxiety may be banished from his life.

These delights, if thou canst give,
Mirth with thee, I mean to live.

(2) **Central Idea**

Milton invokes the spirit of Mirth, or youthful jollity and cheerfulness. He bids melancholy to be off in the far-off gloomy desert and welcomes Mirth, which is known as Euphrosyne (or Merriment) in the heavens. He wants this fairy to come in the company of her sister, Liberty, dancing with light feet, and he would like to be one of her devotees. He would like to see her in the early morning when the sun rises from East in all its splendour and glory. Then his mind thinks of new pleasures under the influence of this spirit. He sees the vast pasture lands, barren mountains and high towers in the trees. Then the scene of the cottage, near which the young men and women are dancing comes before his eyes. Next to this he images the towered cities with their busy hum and throngs of knights and ladies, and scenes of revelry and feasts. Finally, he asks Mirth to fill his mind with supurb melodies such as surpass the music of Orpheus with which he had half-won the heart of Pluto for the sake of bringing back his wife from the next world.

(3) **Summary**

L'Allegro is an outburst of the spirit of joy which want to banish care from life. Many are the moods of a man, and the way of his worldly sojourn is sometimes rugged sometimes smooth. There are moments in life, when a man almost seems to revel in gloom, and there are also bright moments when he loses himself in an ecstasy of joy:

this latter mood is the subject of this poem. Milton was a master of poetic diction and lofty style and he begins by bidding "Loathed Melancholy" to leave him and retire into its dark, dreary and desolate abode. He invites the goddess of Mirth—the daughter of Venus and Bacchus to come and fill his heart, with boundless joy. She should bring with herself merry smiles, hearty laughter, delightful sports, playful wit and endless gaiety. The poet also yearns for the presence of the mountain Nymph, Liberty, because joy should be unrestricted. He wishes to be a faithful follower of these goddesses that he may enjoy all the innocent pleasures which life can afford. Here begins the beautiful description of the coming of dawn which is heralded by the songs of the lark, the rosy tints of the eastern horizon and the merry cries of the cock as it struts proudly before its hens. The lovely picture of the countryside walking into activity is drawn in vivid phrase and we can see the fresh morning, the golden light and the glorious clouds. The ploughman looks with delight at the furrows; the dairy-maid sings her song, the reaper sharpens his sickle and the happy shepherd feels proud of his flock. The cries of the hunters and the hounds are in our ears and the merry spectacle of grass-lands and the grazing sheep, the mountains and the peaceful clouds, flowers, rivers and streams and castles are before our eyes. The poet's imagination roves freely over valley, rock and hill and fixes upon the happy life of peasants in the cottages where they enjoy their simple meals. In the small villages on the upland, the young men and their maids are dancing to the cheerful music. The sunny day passes away with all these sports and the evening begins all the lovers together and they eat and drink and tell amusing tales about the fairies and their little pranks. The young man tells the company how he got the work of thrashing the corn done by the Robin Goodfellow and when the stories are done, everyone goes to sleep lulled by soft breeze.

The poet's fancy now turns to the delightful sights in cities at night and he brings before us the happy picture of ladies and brave knights having their glorious revels among the brilliant lights. He invokes the blessing of Hymen so

that the joys of these gathering may be complete and perfect in every respect. After this, the poet seeks the pleasures of the stage and the deep raptures of sweet music which may arouse the soul of Orpheus from its golden sleep on beds of flowers in Paradise. And thus having revealed in the various delights of country and town life Milton ends by saying,

These delights, if you canst give,
Mirth with thee, I mean to live.

(4) Paraphrase

Lines 1—10. O hateful Melancholy, leave me and go away from me. You are the child of Cerberus (husband) and the black Midnight (wife of Cerberus) and were born in the deserted Stygian (hellish) cave in the midst of frightful spirits, fearful cries and ugly sights. Go, and find for yourself some dark, hideous cave where the hovering Darkness spreads his watchful wings and the night raven (a bird that cries at night) sings its dreary songs. Live there for ever in the dark Cimmerian desert under the black shades and low-edged rocks which are as rugged and rough as your hair.

Lines 11—16. But come, O beautiful goddess, who are called in Heaven by the name of Euphrosyne while the men call you heart-easing Mirth, the beautiful Venus (goddess of love) bore you to the merry Bacchus (god of wine and revelry) at a birth alongwith the two other sister Graces (Meat and Drink).

Lines 17—24. Or perhaps, as some wiser mythologists tell us, the playful Zephyr (West Wind) which is a herald of spring, met Aurora (the dawn goddess) while she was sporting and gathering flowers ; and there, on the beds of blue violet and dew washed, freshly blossomed roses, he filled or impregnated her with you who are a beautiful sprightly gay and elegant daughter.

Lines 25—32. Come quickly, Nymph (the poet addresses Mirth as Nymph) and bring with you all the tokens and gestures of merriment : bring fun and youthful gaiety,

satirical and fanciful sayings and sportive tricks, nods and merry gestures and smiles which curl and twist the features and hang constantly on the cheek of Hebe (the personification youth, daughter of love and Juno) and love to live in the smooth natural hollows of the face. Bring sport or play which mocks at anxiety that wrinkles a man's face and bring Laughter which makes a man hold his sides because of excessive joy.

Lines 33—36. Come and walk lightly on your sportive and wild toes leading in your right hand sweet Liberty, which is a Nymph of the mountains.

Lines 37—48. And O Goddess of Mirth, If I pay to you the proper homage of a worshipper, be gracious enough to allow me to become one of your followers so that I may live with you and the mountain Nymph Liberty and enjoy all the innocent pleasures freely. I shall then be free to hear the lark flying high and frightening the dull night with its songs from the watchtower of the Heavens, till the variegated (marked with different colours) morning rises in the east and wishes me a good morning through the sweet-briar or the vine or the Honeysuckle (all these three are piants often growing against the side or walls of houses).

Lines 49—52. All this while, the cock dispels (drives away) the thin remainder of darkness (twilight) by means of its merry cries and walks proudly before the hens towards the pile of hay or the store-house.

Lines 53—62. And it is often delightful to listen to the sound of the hunting dogs and the bugle which come out merrily from the side of some gravish-white hill and awaken the sleepy morning and fill the high wood with sharp echoes or sounds. Sometimes it is pleasant to walk in the open by a line of closely growing elms (a kind of tree)or on the green mounds straight towards the eastern gate where the glorious sun, which is dressed in flames and golden light, begins its heavenly tour or glorious procession while the clouds are robed and adorned in a thousand beautiful colours.

Lines 63—68. Close at hand, the ploughman looks at the furrows in the field and whistles in joy while the dairy-girl sings her gay song and the reaper sharpens his sickle (an instrument for cutting grass etc.) and every shepherd counts his sheep under the hawthorn (a small tree) in the valley.

Lines 69—80. At once my mind's eye catches sight of new and delightful object while the landscape spreads itself before me; and it can see the raddish-brown grass lands and the gray, untills and unsown areas where the flocks of sheep keep wandering about eating little bits of grass: it sees the bare tops of the mountain on which the tired clouds often lie for repose (rest) and pasture-lands nicely decorated with daisies, shallow streams and wide rivers : it sees towers and walls of an old castle rising out of the thick groves of where, perhaps, some beautiful lady lives who is the centre of everybody's attention in the neighbourhood.

Lines 81—90. Close to this castle in the wood, the smoke is rising out of the chimney of some cottage between two old oak-trees where Cordon and Thyrsis (pastoral names of peasants) having met together, are sitting at their delicious (tasty) dinner consisting of herbs (a plant) and other country products which the neat and tidy Phillis has prepared, and sets before them. After serving the dinner, she leaves the shady enclosure quickly and goes with Thestylis to bind the bundles of corn; or if it is the earlier season, she mends her way to the yellowish-brown pile of hay (dry grass) in the meadow.

Lines 91—96. Sometimes the small villages on the upland with their free and safe delights attract the attention when the cheerful bells are ringing and the gay rebecks (a musical instrument like the violin) are sending forth their sweet music to numerous young men and maids who are dancing in the variegated shade of the trees.

Lines 97—99. And the young and the old come out for sport and merriment in the sunshine of the holiday and go on sporting till the day declines and the light begins to fade into twilight.

Lines 100—102. And then all of them gather in a group to enjoy the drinking of fragrant nut-brown wine and stories are told about many tricks and clever deeds and about the fairy Mab who eats up all the curds and creams of the dairy at night.

Lines 103—116. One of the girls tells the company how she was pinched and pulled by the mischievous fairy and a young man relates his own story how he was led by the will-o'-the wisp (it is the Jack and lantern, which led people in the night into marshes and waters) and how he made the hardworking spirit (called Robin Goodfellow) work hard to earn his cream-bowl set properly as his rewards, because in one night, before the rise of the dawn, this spirit beat out the grain from the whole corn by means of his invisible flail (an implement for threshing corn)—a work which even ten labourers could not finish in so short a time. After threshing the corn the sturdy and stupid spirit returns into the house (fatigued with the task) and, filled with his cream-bowl, throws himself down and lying full length along the whole breath of his fireplace, warms his sturdy and hairy body before the fire. Then finally, he goes out of doors, fully charged with his bowl of cream even before the cock sings out the songs of the morning. After telling all these tales about fairies and fiends, the country peasants and maids go to bed and are soon lulled into sleep by the murmuring breezes.

Lines 117—124. The poet's imagination now turns to the mirth in towns at night and we can see the towered cities full of delightful sights and the busy gatherings of men where numerous brave knights and barons hold rich revels and masks and other shows in their most splendid dresses in the company of lovely ladies whose bright eyes spread sweetness all around and judge the deservings of witty men and soldiers who try to win the favour of the most beautiful women, admired by all.

Lines 125—130. Let Hymn (the god of marriage) come often in the midst of these gatherings wearing clothes

of deep yellow colour, carrying a light in his hand and bringing with him great glory, feasting; sports, masked performances, old fashioned shows and all those gay sights which the passionate poets fancy on summer evening by the side of streams where spirits often visit.

Lines 131—134. These sports will be followed by a visit to the busy stage (theatre) where Johnson will show his great art or sweet Shakespeare the child of Fancy will sing his songs with a certain wild and native elegance.

Lines 135—140. And, to keep me always safe from the consuming worries of life, O Mirth wrap me in gentle and sweet tunes of music which may sing out poems of permanent worth in notes so sweet that they may pass into the depth of the melting soul with many turns and twists of harmonious sweetness lengthened out with the wild enthusiasm and melodious skill of the musician.

Lines 141-144. The sweet voice will be flowing through the various tunes and untying all the chains which bind the hidden sound of music or showing all the hidden powers of music.

Lines 145—150. So that even Orpheus (a mythical Greek poet and musician) will raise his head from his golden sleep on heaps of flowers of Paradise and hear music which would have charmed the ear of Pluto to such an extent that he would set free Eurydice—the wife of Orpheus.

Lines 151—152. O Mirth, if you can give me such delights as these, I should always live in your company.

(5) Critical Appreciation

L'Allegro is a poem which is a dedication to Mirth or spirit of Joy, or cultivated pleasures of the highest type. The poet wishes to be one of the crew of Mirth and Liberty, or to be a devotee of Music and Poetry—and lapped in the "soft Lydian airs", and "Married to immortal verse." The pleasures mentioned in the poem are romantic in spirit and cover a wide range. The poet gives a free reign to his

imagination which roams over the hills and dales, towered cities and busy market places, and watches with delightful musings, the beauties of the dawn among the snow-clad mountains.

> " Where the great Sun begins his state,
>
> Robed in flames and amber light."

In this romantic conception of his theme Milton anticipates the great Romantics of the nineteenth century with whom the delights of Nature became a creed of devotion.

Milton is the great religious poet of England who tried "to justify the ways of God to man" in his *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained*. He attempted to bring the colossal subjects within the compass of his poetry, but here for once he has chosen the common themes instead of the grand themes of heavens and the ultimate fate of mankind. In a simple, wishful mood he invokes the spirit of Mirth, glances at the shifting scenes of the world with a panoramic vision and ends with the desire to live in the company of Mirth, if she can give him the joys he has mentioned. "He places himself so sympathetically, close to the daily tasks and pleasures of the ordinary, uninportant men and women." But they are not the carnal pleasures, or pleasures of a sensual type. They are the highly refined and noble type of joys in which innocent men and women in the world, and men of taste in particular, have ever taken delight.

Having made a close study of the ancient classics of the Greeks and the Romans, Milton makes extensive allusions to Greek and Roman mythology. He conceives Mirth to be born of lovely Venus at a time when Zephyr, the West Wind, was playing with Aurora, the Dawn. Her smiles are compared to the joyful feelings on Hebe's cheek. And the Music for which his soul yearns should be superior to that of Orpheus who was on the verge of bringing his dead wife from the next world but was snatched away by the hard condition imposed by Pluto.

There are lines in this poem which have become famous in the English literature for their beauty and poetic charm, e. g.

Haste thee, Nymph, and bring with thee,
Jest, and youthful jollity,
Quips and Cranks and wanton Wiles,
Nods and breaks and wreathed Smiles.

Or again,

And every shepherd tells his tail,
Under the hawthorne in the dale.

[Milton]

(6) Points to Remember

1. The poet requests the goddess of Mirth to come quickly and bring Liberty with her.

2. The goddess of Mirth is requested to bring with her smiles, laughter, jests, jokes, nods and becks.

3. The poet would like to be one of the worshippers of Mirth and Liberty.

4. He would like to enjoy the pleasures of all kinds to his heart's content.

5. He would like to hear the lark in the spotted dawn.

6. He would be delighted with the noisy crowing of the cock, walking proudly before his hens.

7. The poet would find pleasure in hearing the bugles and the barking of hounds in the morning chase.

8. Sunrise, clouds of different colours, the whistling ploughman, the milk-maid singing blithely, and the mower sharpening his scythe, would afford him immense pleasure.

9. He would like to feast his eyes on the beautiful landscape, with wide rivers, small streams, meadows covered with flowers of different hues, and castles concealed in groves. There he would like to see the beautiful woman who is the centre of attraction of all the people.

10. He would like to watch the shepherds taking their meals in their cottages or engaged in binding sheaves of corn.

11. The poet would like to see the dances of the country-folk and hear the bells of the churches ringing and the sound of rebecks.

12. In the evening he would like to hear the tales of the fairies and how will-o'-the-wisp misled a peasant boy.

13. Some peasant would relate how Robin Goodfellow helped him in threshing the corn overnight.

14. The poet would then enjoy the delights and pleasures of city life.

15. He would like to watch the knights holding tournaments. He would see marriage festivities, masques and other display of merriment.

16. In the evening he would like to watch the comedies of Ben Jonson and Shakespeare.

17. Last of all he would like to hear divine music which would penetrate into his soul and rouse the chained spirit. The music will be so sweet that Orpheus, the great singer of old, would hear its notes from Paradise.

(7) Recapitulatory Questions

Q. 1. There are word-pictures in the poem "L'Allegro." Give examples and point out their literary beauties.

Ans. At the time when Milton wrote his poem interest in the objects of nature was a rare thing, but a group of Puritan poets were beginning to take delight in the sights and sounds of nature Milton brings a rich imagination to bear on his subject-matter in this poem. Unlike the realists, who strictly confine themselves to the real objects in life, he creates a beautiful imagery by scenes suggested to him by the mental eye. The poem is full of word-pictures which lend a special charm to it. In fact, the chief interest of the poem lies in the rich

imagery of the word-pictures. They are too numerous to be exhausted. A few examples will, however, illustrate the artistic value of the word-pictures in contributing to the beauty of the poem.

In the opening lines the poet wants to shun the sight of Melancholy whom he calls the daughter of Cerberus, i. e., the watch-dog at the gates of hell. She was born at midnight in the Stygian caves (the lower regions of hell) in the midst of terrible shrieks and cries and unholy sights, and she was completely forlorn. He asks her to go and find out some ugly place for herself in the desolate rocks where the ravens give out their shrill cries and darkness spreads her wings, or she may dwell in some gloomy desert. Now this picture of the personification of Melancholy is true to the core. Wherever Melancholy holds her sway there are shrieks of agony, cries of pain, misery and wretchedness, and a gloomy atmosphere prevails, the persons afflicted by it are forlorn by every human soul. As contrasted to this there follows the picture of Mirth, who is also personified. She was born of lovely Venus along with the other two sisters, because according to the Greek mythology Euphrosyne was one of the three Graces, daughters and attendants of Venus. Or it may be, she came into existence when the fair breeze Zephyr was playing in a spirit with Aurora (the Dawn) in the beautiful spring season of May. Then, on the beds of blue violets and petals of rose blown fresh by the breezes, this fair and plumpy daughter of Venus made her appearance. Now, it is characteristic of the spirit of Mirth that it is attended by freshness and pleasant fragrance and cheerful happy surroundings.

The poet conceives Mirth as a fair Nymph (or fairy) who induces a light and happy mood. There are smiles on her face which resemble the smiles on the cheeks of Hebe (the daughter of Jove and Juno and the spirit of Youth personified). He wants her to dance with light, fantastic toes, leading by her right hand the fairy of the mountains, Liberty. The poet wishes to be included among her crew and yearns for that privilege as a reward for the homage which he is paying to her. This picture, again,

is a faithful representation of the spirit of jollity and his own humble role as a devotee to that fairy is a beautiful conception.

The appearance of the Dawn is described with a poetic conception. The hounds and horns of the hunters wake up the sleeping morn from the side of the snowy hill. The sun begins its stately march from the eastern gate of his palace, robed in flames and amber light, the clouds are dressed in liveries (uniforms) of different colours, while the farmer whistles over the fields he has just ploughed, and the milkmaid sings her melodious song. Thus, Milton creates a scene of beauty and charm, and gives a faithful picture of the morning.

Q. 2. What is the conception of a happy man by Milton? Discuss it with reference to his poem "L'Allegro."

Ans. The poem *L'Allegro* was written when Milton was a young man. The poem contains the buoyancy of a youthful spirit. He would like to enjoy unrestricted liberty and unconfined mirth. He likes to enjoy humorous turns of expression and witty sayings. He appreciates smiles and dimpled cheeks and such laughter which splits the ribs.

Such things can only be found in a sophisticated society and not in rural atmosphere. This poem is a combination of the gaiety of the cities and countryside. The poet would like to hear the song of the lark, the crowing of a cock. He would like to take a walk out in the open and enjoy the rising of the sun. He would like to see ploughman tilling the ground and whistling. He would like to see beautiful meadows, rivulets and wide rivers. Then he would like to roam about in the towers situated high on some hill.

Milton mixes urban and rural delights. He likes to see shepherds at their work in the evening; he would like to listen to their tales.

After finishing the pleasures of countryside and the pastoral people, he would like to go to the towered cities

and watch tournaments and marriages there, with their masques and revelry. Then he would like to see the comedies of Shakespeare and Ben Jonson being staged.

Lastly he would like to listen to such music as would expand his soul. These are the delights and pleasures which please Milton.

Q. 3. What do you learn of Milton's Life and character from his poems as they appear in your text-book ?

Ans. Milton's life and character is revealed in his poems. The two poems *L'Allergo* and *Il Penseroso* represent Milton in his simplest mood, the mood of the quiet years at Horton, spent in the open air and among plain folk. The poem points to the two mood from which a cheerful man and a meditative man regard life. Both moods are described as they might actually be experienced by a happy, cultured and serious man like Milton himself. The mood of Milton revealed from the poem shows that Milton was never again to be so genial as he is here. Never again does he place himself so sympathetically close to the daily task and pleasures of ordinary, unimportant men and women.

Milton was not a melancholy man in the ordinary sense of the word. Milton was a man of action and character, and his melancholy is that of the spirit in his own *Comus* who began—

"Wrapt in a pleasing fit of melancholy,
To meditate my rural minstrely".

The mood of melancholy of Milton as revealed in *Il Penseroso* gives us pleasant glimpses of Milton's walks abroad and studies at home in the Horton years. He talk of his scholarly hours spent gravely and quietly but far from unhappily. These poems represent only a holiday moment in a life already deeply serious.

The poem *Light* reveals another aspect of Milton's life and mind. This poem is taken from the great epic English

poems, *Paradise Lost*. Milton became blind when he wrote this poem. The blind poet rejected the themes of Renaissance and found inspiration and matter only in the Bible. Milton believed that with the help of the Holy Light he would have ample compensation for the loss of his physical eyes. This poem is the first of a Puritan's prolonged meditations of the Bible. It plants the vision the Bible has given him.

The story of Samson with its triumphant catastrophe naturally made a strong appeal to Milton, despondent and perplexed. "Both Milton and Samson had a high sense of vocation ; both had entered on their work with a consciousness of self-consecration ; each regarded himself as possessed of exceptional God-given powers bestowed in him for a certain end; both had achieved remarkable success that seemed signal tokens of Divine favour ; both had been champions of true religion and their country's cause, both amid the ruin of that cause lived in obscurity and impotence ; if not both a reproach to that cause, both alike perplexed and perturbed in spirit by the unaccountable way of Divine Providence."

The great task that Milton had undertaken for himself from his Puritan upbringing is to justify the ways of God to men, and this is done, in this poem, with a cheerful optimism. This is revealed by the two extracts forming our study for the present. Here in these poems we find a firm faith in the ultimate victory of God. Though the ways of God may be unintelligible to us, yet everything is meant for the best. Milton says that God bestows the minds of His devotees with a sense of calm and peace.

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4. IL PENSEROSO

(1) Introduction to the Poem

Il Penseroso means the pensive man or the thoughtful and gloomy man whereas L'Allegro means the merry and cheerful man. This poem, as already pointed out, represents Melancholy or gloomy mood, and Milton seems to have expanded and heightened some of the sentiments which he borrowed from a beautiful song on Melancholy in Beaumont

and Flecher's *Nice Valor* or *Passionate Man.* "But Beaumont's melancholy is the melancholy of the swain (a peasant) : of the mind that thinks of nature and man, but in the grove and the cottage. Milton's melancholy is that of a scholar and philosopher ; of the intellect, that has ranged the mazes of science, and that decides upon vanity and happiness, from large intercourse with man, and upon extensive knowledge and experience." It would be absurd to say that Milton was indebted to Beaumont's song for his Penseroso, but it did supply some images to his poem. "Milton's poem is among those happy works of genius, which leave a reader no choice how his mind shall be affected."

The poet begins by bidding "vain deluding joys" to have him and to fill some idle brain ; he welcomes the sage and holy goddess, divinest Melancholy whom he calls "Pensive Nun, devout and pure, sober, steadfast, and demure." Whereas in L'Allegro he yearns towards the joys of a sunny day and a merry heart, here in this poem, he avoids sunshine and yearns towards Gloom, Retired Leisure, Calm, Peace and Quiet and the Cherub Contemplation. He wants a secluded place where, like a hermit, far from the madding crowd, he may give himself up to contemplation or sweet, silent thought.

> Till old experience do attain.
> To something like prophetic strain.

(2) Central Idea

The poet invokes the spirit of Melancholy, which stands here for gravity and serious thoughts, and not the sense of gloom or sadness. He wants to drive out cheap joys and calls them foolish as they dwell in idle brains. He welcomes the wise and holy goddess (Melancholy) who is supposed to have a black colour, which is really the colour of Wisdom. She is the sister of the Queen of Ethiopia and possesses a beauty in her blackness. She is a reflective Nun who comes dressed in dark robes. She walks with stately steps and with a musing gait. Her companion fairies are

Peace, Quiet, Retired Leisure, and the angelic Contemplation. The poet imagines to wander in the dead of night in quest of her, when the moon has reached her noon. Or again, in a vast expanse of land to hear the tolling of the curfew, or study the stars, to be absorbed in a study of tragedies, under the influence of this spirit. He might study the Greek poets, or hear the music of Orpheus, or read Chaucer's poems, throughout the night, till the morning appears. But he would not like to enjoy the brilliance of the dawn; he would prefer to hide in some shady forest and sleep there under the influence of the unseen genius of the wood. Let this spirit cast a religious light on his soul and fill it with a music that would transport him to heavens.

(3) Critical Summary

Both the poems, *L'Allergo* and *Il Penseroso* make a universal appeal to all men. The author's design, however, is not to show how objects take their colours from the mind, by representing the effect of the same thing upon the gay and the melancholy temper, or upon the same man in his different moods, but to show how, among the successive variety of appearances, every disposition of mind take hold on those objects by which it may be gratified. In this poem we are concerned with the pensive man. The cheerful man hears the lark in the morning ; the pensive man hears the nightingale in the evening. He walks, at one time, unseen to muse at midnight ; and at another, hears the solemn curfew. If the weather drives him home, he sits in a room lighted only by *glowing embers* ; or by a lonely lamp, he outwatches the North Star, to discover the habitation of separate souls. He varies the shades of contemplation, by thinking over the magnificent or pathetic scenes of tragic and epic poetry. When the morning comes, it is a morning gloomy with rain and winds ; and when the day advances and the sun throws its piercing light everywhere, he chooses a remote thicket by the side of some stream and falls asleep, lulled by the humming bee and murmuring water, and with melancholy enthusiasm expects some mysterious dream or some music played by aerial performers.

Melancholy, like Mirth, is a solitary, silent inhabitant of the breast which neither receives nor transmits communication ; therefore Milton makes no mention of a philosophical friend. The pensive man, unlike the cheerful man, never loses himself in crowds but walks the cloister or visits the church. Like Mirth, Melancholy also delights in music which may affect the heart of Pluto even. But whereas, for the old age of cheerfulness, Milton makes no provision, he conducts Melancholy with great dignity to the close of life. Throughout the poem images are properly selected and nicely distinguished. The poet is highly pleased with and loves the choral church-music, the Gothic cloisters, the vaulted roof and the painted windows. Joys are vain to him ; Melancholy is holy and dignified despite its blackness, and it holds communion with heaven. Her proper companions are Leisure and Contemplation. All night long the gloomy man thinks about great souls and tries the heights of thought. He delights in the representations of Tragedy and in the romantic poems of Chaucer and Spenser. Such are the sober pleasures of Il Penseroso and if allowed to have these, he wishes to live always with Melancholy.

(4) Critical Appreciation

Il Penseroso comes in direct contrast to its companion poem *L'Allegro*. They represent the two different moods of the poet and he wants to work sometimes under the influence of the one and sometimes under the others. As *L'Allegro* is dedicated to the spirit of joy and Mirth, *Il Penseroso* is dedicated to Quiet Contemplation, love of gravity, seriousness and silent musings. It would be wrong to suppose that Milton is addressing Melancholy as the spirit of sadness and grief which has a depressing effect on the soul. Under the influence of the Melancholy which Milton wants to induce, the soul advances forward in Wisdom and Philosophy, shuns cheap optimism and light-hearted joys. It is a mood of protest against revelry and merry-making. If there is a sadness at all in this mood it is the sadness of the soul that aspires to achieve the highest things and not of the man who seeks carnal pleasures and feels disappointed after too much of self-indulgence.

The picture of the goddess of Melancholy which Milton creates is extremely noble and has an ennobling influence. A man who has come under sway must regulate his life strictly and must be a self-controlled person. He must be the happiest of mortals because he enjoys a peace of mind, a contentment and stoic temper which ordinary men do not have. She is a pure spirit and Milton gives her the name of a pensive man, devout and pure and in temper she is sober, steadfast, and demure. Her companions are Peace and Quiet, Spare Fast, Retired Leisure, Contemplation and Silence. Such a spirit must lead a soul to spiritual advancement.

The activities mentioned by the poet in which he wants his soul to be absorbed cover a wide range. He would be deeply interested in philosophy and pay his homage to Pluto; he would make a study of the heavens and look at the orbits of the stars as the great Hermes, the mythical Egyptian astronomer, once did; and he would enjoy the great classics of the past, particularly the tragedies of the Greeks, the Elizabethans and the later English dramatists. He is keen to enjoy the poetry of Chaucer and Spenser. He yearns for a quiet contemplative mood and seeks a shelter safe from the penetrating light of the dawn—a shadowy seat among the pines and asks, where he might be awakened by a divine music sent by the Unseen Genius of the wood. Above all, his soul desires to attain the heavenly bliss which is the privilege of the few gifted souls, whole and pure, whose earthly existence is in accordance with the Divine will. Thus, it is an invocation to the highest Deity of culture, religion, morality and self discipline. Under its influence he can shape his life in an ideal manner, on a most high intellectual and moral plane.

Brooke compares these two poems with Gray's *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard* and remarks that "the Great merits of these poems are curiously like those of the famous *Elegy* of that other London scrivener's son. Thomas Gray, who, if he had lived a century earlier, would have been Milton's near neighbour in Buckinghamshire. Milton

lacks the special "graveyard" interest and strain of sentimentality; his vignettes (portraits) are sharper, but, like Gray's, they express the reflections of a bookish man in pastoral scenery with a supreme felicity. Marvel may sometimes have approached perfection in this genre (kind of poetry), but few others, surely, in English poetry."

Legouis points out the literary beauties of the two poems in the following words : "These two poems, which, contain altogether 328 short lines are filled to overflowing with the results of accurate observations and are an inexhaustible lesson in art". At the same time they display the whole of Milton's register, the extreme notes of the gamut (the whole series of notes) of his feelings at this time. The register is short ; it excludes sin, evil and pain, hardly includes mankind except as a passing spectacle, and has no place for any feeling which is not both very pure and very egoistical—the intimate pleasures of contemplation and study. Milton's soul held, as shall be seen, what was greater and better than this : he was capable of sublimity, devotion to a cause, and submission to great sacrifice. The theme of *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso* is merely, on the last analysis, the search for the pleasures to which he was most susceptible, and his final preference is for the most solitary and unsociable of them, for melancholy. Curiously he excludes love from his sources of felicity. This young man of twenty-five had turned his gaze heavenward and almost dreamt of a hermit's cell. Even in *L'Allegro*, there is only one, and the vaguest, allusion to a fair lady living in a neighbouring castle bosomed high in tufted trees.

(5) **Paraphrase**

Lines 1—10. The poet asks false joys and pleasures to go away from him and host of follies which had come into being without a father because these were of very little use to him and they also filled the mind with useless things. It was proper for them to live in the mind of some one who led an idle life and the imagination of such people was possessed by showy ideas and images. These images

are so many in number that they are as many as are particles of dust in the rays of the sun. They are like dreams that are born in the mind when we have been listening to music for a very long time.

Lines 11—20. The poet extends a sincere and honest welcome to pensiveness, which the poet calls divine and holy. The divine face of wisdom is too bright with knowledge and its brilliance is so great that we are not able to sęe its real colour. Thus wisdom, to the human eye, is overlaid with black colour ; but this black colour is the hue of respect and reverence. Thus appeared the sister of prince Mewnon or the starred queen of Ethiopia who praised her beauty and felt it to be more than the beauty of water nymph.

Lines 21—30. This praise of beauty of Queen Ethiopia angered the mermaids ; but wisdom was born of better and nobler parents because long ago she was born of the Union of Vesta and Saturn. She is the daughter of Saturn and such a union as that of Vesta and Saturn was not considered something mean or low in their times. The meetings between Vesta and the god Saturn met in shining bowers and valleys and he met her in the most hidden and secret shady parts of woods which were dear to Ida and they met at a time when there was no fear of their being detected by Jove.

Lines 31—40. The poet then calls wisdom, a nun, who is religious minded as well as pure. She is calm, quiet and gentle and is dressed in a garment of dark colour and has a fine and sublime train. The stole wrapped round her body is of dark colour and is made cypress lown cloth. This lown is wrapped round her pure and proper shoulders. The poet invites her to come in her proper condition with regular steps and in a thoughtful manner. Her eyes would all the time be talking with the heavens and her brooding spirit could be seen in her eyes.

Lines 41—50. There her eyes would become fixed in a sacred passion for ever. Thus she would be lost in thinking and appear to be statue made of marble. Then

she would look down with a sad downward glance towards the earth and with her would become joined peace and quiet. One of her qualities would be frugal living *i.e.*, spare diet, taken in the company of gods. Then she would hear the muses singing in a circle round the altar of Jove. Added to the above features would be leisure passed in a retired place which passes its time in we kept and properly prepared gardens.

Lines 51—60. But, says the poet, first of all bring along contemplation which soars high up in the heavens contemplation says the poet flies high up in the heavens and goes as high as seen and it flies on golden wings and its chariot is fiery wheeled. Contemplation is accompanied by Silence so that philomel may not sing a song in his praise and philomel would sing a song about her sweet and sad bad condition and thus make smooth the brow of the night and cynthia would check the dragons yoked to her chariot as she passed gently accustomed to draw his oak chariot.

Lines 61—70. This sweet bird avoids the noises made by folly. The song sung by Philomel was musical and pensive. Milton calls her the singer of the forests and he would request her to sing her evening song and when he did not find there he would walk unobserved on the dry and smooth well-mowen green turf. As he would walk he would observe the moon and ride along the place where the moon is at its highest in the sky. He was like a person who had lost his way through the un-marked paths of the sky.

Lines 71—80. And often she loved her head as she passed through white clouds scattered in the heavens. The poet says that some times as he stood on a raised track of land he heard the sound of curfew that came over the wide watered shore. These sounds come from the water that moved in the form of waves along the shore and if the air did not allow the sound to pass then some quite place far removed appeared proper and fit. In such places the bright heat of embers appeared to grow dark in the darkness of that room.

Lines 81—90. This room is quite and silent and is far away from all sorts of joys and pleasures and here no sound was audible except the sound produced by the cricket near the earth, or the sound produced by bell man who rings the bell in the drowsy atmosphere of the night. These bells were rung to save the doors from injuries that might come in the darkness of night. The poet says that he may be sitting in a lonely tower and he would have a lighted lamp by his side. There he would sit and work late in the night till the star Bear is seen in the late hours of the night and by its side would be seen the pointed star, Hermes. There he would sit and unfold the secrets of the work of Pluto and in words express ideas about all things of this world.

Lines 91—100. Thus he would interpret for all readers the secrets of the ideas which are enfolded in words and these ideas of great writers who have died and gone from this world. These would also express ideas about those spirits that live in the air, the water or under the ground. These are in full agreement with the solar planets and the primeval forces of nature. Some times he would write about great tragedies which would come with full authority and sweep down on the earth. In these tragedies would be presented about Thelees Pelops or it may be a story about Troy.

Lines 101—110. Or he may write about something which come at a later time and which is rare to find. This would be about the drama which was played on the stage. Then he addresses the pensive muse and gives it the name of sad Virgin and says that with its help he may recreate the picture of Musaeus or he may ask the soul of Orpheus sing such songs as were sung by him on the harp and which made Pluto weep. Though Pluto was god of the Hades, he granted the request of Orpheus and allowed him to take away his wife Proserpina. Or he may complete the half told story of the brave cambuscan.

Lines 111—120. The story about Comball and about Algarsife and whose wife was Canace. This Canace owned the ring and glass that bestowed on her virtue. Or he may

write the story of the horse that was made of brass and was ridden by the Tartar King. And about any other things that had been the subject matter of poems written by famous poets and singers. These poets had sung in serious and solemn poems about tournaments and trophies that had been won in contests and about forests and charms. In these poems there is a good deal of suggestion and more is meant that what is said in words.

Lines 121—130. Thus says Milton, the night would find him busy in scholastics till morning would come and civil population would be busy in their work. Morning would not be deceived or defrauded as it was previously by previous poets who were immature. Now the morning would appear in its appropriate and desirable form. It will come covered in a handsome clouds, the fast moving birds would be moving and produce level sounds. After the wind had blown there come shower of rain and the leaves trees which had rustled in the wind become covered with small drops of rain that fall upon them from projections of walls.

Lines 131—140. Then the sun throws its rays which are bright and light giving, at that time Milton would like to go into the dimly lighted clusters of trees. In these places there are brown shadows and pastoral lovers. These groves are of pine trees and big oak trees. These forests were never cut or pruned by the axe. Never has the rising and falling sound of the axe has ever been heard in this forest. These sounds never frightened the nymphs and forced them to leave their sacred home. They lived in some secret place near the river where no unholy eye could observe them.

Lines 141—150. The poet asks that he may be enabled to hide himself from the light of the sun which makes things bright. In the day time when the honey carrying bee is busy at work taking honey from flowers. The water goes murmur and tempts one to fall asleep lulled by its slow and repeated sound. Instead he says let him have day dreams which are strange and unusual. These dreams

may fall upon his eye-lids and show him such things as are not visible otherwise.

Lines 151—160. Milton says that when he would come out of his sleep there would be music everywhere in the atmosphere. This would be divine Music sent by some holy spirits for the good and welfare of human beings. Or this would be music played by spirit of the forest but he asks his guiding nurse not to allow his feet to stray from the sequestered limits of his poetic inspiration. Thus he would be able to love continuously the arch of music and poetry that has been thus formed. There are old pillars that uphold the dome of this roof from which flowed the light of music and poetry that spread all over the world.

Lines 161—170. From the dome shaped room would flow the music and the sound of the organ and this music would become combined with the quire singing below in the room. Thus would prayer be offered to God and hymns sung in his praise. The music and singing would be sweet and passing through his ears would give him great pleasure. This music would be ecstatic and would bring before his mind a picture of paradise. Thus in his old age he would be able to find out a place of shelter. He would sit in that old, moss covered room, wear a gown made from cloth of hair and tell his rosary like a monk.

Lines 171—176. Thus in loneliness he would make a study of all the stars in heaven and about the plants that suck moisture from the night dews. Thus he would acquire experience that would give him some insight into the future. These are the joys and pleasures that come from melancholy and in the midst of these he would like to live.

(6) Points to Remember

1. The poet asks joys that come through folly to go away from him.

2. Melancholy makes him sage and thoughtful so he welcomes it to come and be his guide.

3. Melancholy, according to Milton leads to pensiveness and contemplation.

4. Milton says that for a poet it is necessary that he should contemplate and think.

5. Scholarly attainments make a poet better and more productive.

6. The poet would like to sit on some raised platform all alone and brood and think.

7. This contemplation would help him to gain an insight into the secrets of life and nature.

8. Here in loneliness he would think over what has been written by old thinkers and philosophers.

9. He would try to recreate in his verses all that he had read in the works of Greek masters.

10. Thus contemplation would help him to make real contribution to the world of art and literature.

11. Greek mythology and the world of nature would give him real inspiration.

12. Interior poets have sat in a atlics and written ; but their works had been poor and not of much worth.

13. The arrival of day would find him still at work busy in writing verses.

14. The beauty of the rising sun would act as an urge and inspiration.

15. Music and orchestra would act as balm for his soul.

16. Thus even in old age he would find relief in peace and quiet that contemplation would bring.

(7) Recapitulatory Questions

Q. 1. Compare and contrast L'Allegro and Il Penseroso.

Ans. *L'Allegro* is the praise of the Mirth as *Il Penseroso* is of Melancholy. The two titles mean—The Cheerful

Man and the Thoughtful or Meditative Man. Thus the two poems represent two different moods of happiness and seriousness and the poet derives pleasure from both these moods. The two contrasted moods may be better expressed as moods of joyous emotion or grave reflection.

The two poems are deliberate studies in contrast. Both the poems start with invocation and then there are a number of word-pictures and scenes followed by praise of music and determination of devotion to Mirth or Melancholy as the poet desires.

The theme of *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso* is merely the search for the pleasure to which he was most susceptible and his final preference is for the most solitary and unsociable of them, Melancholy. This is natural to the temperament of Milton who was not gamesome and given to carefree merriment but was a deeply meditative and a serious type of thinker.

In *L'Allegro* Milton points out all the joys which life and nature can bring a man—the spring, the morning, the lark's song, the sunrise, the men and women at work on land, rustic meals, the harvest, the stories told at night by the chimney-side.

> And pomp and feast and revelry.
> With mask and antique pageantry.

As opposed to this, Milton describes the yet more penetrating pleasures of solitary meditation, sunset, the nightingale's song, moonlight on the ' dry smooth-shaven green,' and to hear :—

> The far off curfew sound.
> Over some wide-watered shore.

Or the Melancholy man is seen among his books ' in some high lonely tower,' reads philosophy or science or he will.

> Sometime let gorgeous tragedy.
> In spectral pall come sweeping by.

Both the poems are the finest expressions of Milton's joyous and sensitive poetic nature and his enthusiasm for beauty in Nature and the manifold delights of music, books, and self-pleasing reverie without being intruded by his moral idealism or personal passion.

L'Allegro and *Il Penseroso* have always been among the best loved of Milton's poems. Modern critics have united in praising the perfection of their workmanship and the sweetness of the temper revealed in them. But they represent only a holiday moment in a life already deeply serious.

Milton represents himself in *Il Penseroso* as witnessing Tragedy, whether on the stage or in his mind's eye, as a spectacle of solemn beauty, and readingy Plato in the indulgence of the speculative fancy. In *L'Allegro* the poet's imagination moves freely over valley, rock and hill and fixes upon the happy life of peasants in the cottages when they enjoy their simple meals.

Milton invokes the spirit of Mirth in the opening of *L'Allegro* and bids Melancholy to go away. On the other hand, in *Il Penseroso*, he welcomes Melancholy and bids the vain deluding joys to be off.

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5. LYCIDAS

(1) Introduction to the Poem

This poem has been written by Milton in the elegiac form. The poet is inspired by a particular sorrow, *i. e.* the death of Lycidas. The poem is written in the conventional pastoral form and the occasion is the death of Edward King, a university Friend. It appears that Milton and King were not very intimate and in the poem the feeling of loss expressed by the poet is more general than particular. The two hundred lines of this poem are considered to be one of the best in English literature. There the pastoral outfit appears out of place and mythological references are too many; but the remarkable perfection of language and form is confined with a personal feeling of

being a mere plaything in the hands of Fate. Apparently Milton is grieved over the untimely death of his friend but in reality it is expression of a lurking fear that a similar fate may not befall him. Lycidas is shown as a man who was fond of work and who avoided cheap joys and pleasures. This is more applicable to Milton than to Edward King.

The poem Lycidas, studied in relation with the two previous poems L'Allergo and Il-Penseroso makes that the reader really understand what the poet talks about. The scholar poet fears that he may not die and leave his mission in life incomplete. The heroic line is time and again replaced by the short line. The theme slowly mounts to a climax and soon comes to a pitch where sound and sense harmonise. Milton was an ardent reformer and the Puritan note is very strong and well marked. Milton was primarily the child of Renaissance and his love for Greek and Roman art and literature is very well evidenced in this poem.

(2) Central Idea

Edward King was a fellow student of the university. He died very young and was mourned by Milton. Milton keenly felt his death before time. King had given promise of becoming a good poet and his untimely death deprived the world of literature of the desirable sympathies and efforts of Lycidas. The poet says that nature too felt sad over this untimely death. The mythological figures are quoted feeling sad over this.

(3) Summary

The poet says that he would pluck flowers and leaves and scatter these on the grave of Lycidas, the young man who have given such great promise of being a great writer in the future. He then asks the muses to mourn over this death which had dealt such a severe blow. The poet says that he and Lycidas were educated in the same university but alas a change had come and Lycidas was no longer one of them. He will no more be seen in the midst of woods

and forests he had been in the habit of visiting. The nymphs and spirits of the forest were sad over his death. Phoebus said that fame was immortal and it lived on after the death of person who had won that fame. Thus many who were interested in art and literature and who prized Lycidas, as a great mind expessed their sorrow. Many poets and thinkers, who cannot otherwise challenge comparison with Lycidas, were alive and doing disservice to the cause of art and literature by writing inferior types of verses. Even the objects of nature, the flower and trees were sad over his death.

(4) Paraphrase

Lines 1—10. Once again, says Milton, he would pluck the leaves of brown myrtles, which are never overgrown with ivy. He had to come to pluck leaves and berries and he was going to do so as a matter of necessity. He was going to pluck their leaves before these fell down with the coming of autumn. He was forced to do so by his bitter need because Lycidas had died even before his youth and then none left behind who could equal him. All would sing his praises.

Lines 11—22. Lycidas was himself a poet of great merit and could write poems of great merit. He must not be left unpraised after his death by drowning. Some verses must be sung in his praise and his death must be mourned by some one. Milton then asks the muses to inspire him to sing the praises of Lycidas. He must begin singing and sing in a lofty strain. Thus some gentle goddess of poetry might inspire him and thus he may get some peace of mind by singing these songs although his heart was pained and was dressed in black dress which was a sign of his sorrow.

Lines 23–36. Milton says that he and Lycidas were educated in the same university, had been members of the same team of scholars and were inspired by similar scenes of nature. They used to walk in the same scenes of nature in the early hours of the day. They both went in company and heard the humming of flies in the environment of nature. Thus they wanderєd about on the hills and in the

valleys until the evening star appeared in the sky and sloped towards the West and thus heralded the advent of evening. In the meantime the villagers were heard singing their folk songs and played upon the lutes and the lyres. Villagers danced their rough, rude dances and satyrs and fawns appeared in the forest. These were the songs loved and liked by old Damotas and creatures of the forest could not long be absent and they too joined this band.

Lines 37—49. Milton laments the sorrowful change and the departure of Lycidas to the other world. Lycidas was dead and gone and would never come back. The woods, the lonely caves that were overgrown with wild thyme and thick vine creepers were mourning for him. All their echoes mourned over him that were gone. The willow thickets and hazel groves were sad because he would no more be seen in their midst. In his life time he passed through all these singing his songs and these trees and bushes fanned him with their leaves. The loss of Lycidas to the poet was as fatal and killing as was the canker to the rose, taint worm to the grazing herd and frost to the flowers.

Lines 50—63. Milton asks the nymphs where were they when death over-took poor Lycidas and killed him pitilessly. At the time of the death of Lycidas the nymphs were not playing either on the hills where lay buried the Druid on the hills of high Mona, neither were they present where Deva spread out in a broad stream. Alas ! says the poet, he still dreamed that Lycidas was yet alive and present there. If this were true how happy the muses would have been because he was their dedicated son. Now the whole nature was grieved over his untimely death. They were sad that the violently blowing wind and storm had made his face bloody and had killed him.

Lines 64—78. Milton says of what use it was to be a poet and write verses. The world does not pay much respect or regard to the work of a poet and poetry writing is considered a thankless work. It would have been better if he had been somebody else and had played with Amaryll is in the shade of trees. He would have played

with the hair of Naera Faim is the sole cause of raising the spirits of people to greater urge for work. Love for fame is the weakness that great minds suffer from. It is for the sake of getting fame that we look down upon joy and pleasure and work hard, but the fair reward that we hope to secure and which we hope would give brilliance to our lives comes and with it comes the furious death that tears us open and kills us. The fame and praise lives on after us, so said Phoebus, this sound fell on the poet's trembling ears.

Lines 79—84. Real Fame and good name does not consist of mere brilliance in the world nor in rumours that spread all over the world. It lies in the admiration that can be seen in the eyes of all of us and the final judgment given by the great god Jove. He is the last and final judge and gives verdict how much we can expect to get in heavens after death.

Lines 85—95. Milton then addresses the fountain Arethuse and its honoured waters and the smooth flowing Minicus which is surrounded and covered by reeds. This was a song of a superior type. Then he says that he would turn to the sound of the waters of the ocean of which Neptune was the god. Neptune questioned the waves of the sea as well as the guilty winds that had been responsible for the death of Lycidas. They asked them what hard accident it was that had caused the death of the poor young man. He asked all the hard and fast blowing winds. The winds that blew across every projection or rocks and they had no idea of what they had done.

Lines 96—102. The answer to these questions was brought by Hippotades and said that no gust of wind had come out from the cave where he kept the winds. The air was calm and on the saltish waters of the ocean were so calm that Pelope and her sisters played on the calm surface of the ocean. The death was caused by the treacherous ship which was built at a time when there was an eclipse. The ship had been equipped at an evil hour and that was the reason why the poet's friend Lycidas was sunk low.

Lines 103—111. Then came Camus, the old and respected man, he walked slowly and his cloak was made of hair and in his head dress sedge had been inter-woven and faint figures had been drawn. He appeared like that red flower which is a sign of suffering. He asked who had broken his most sacred promise and trust. Last of all came the pilot of the Golilean lake. He carried with him two big keys of two different metals.

Lines 112—124. One of these Keys was made of gold and it opened the door while the iron one shut it. Camus shook his locks of hair that were covered under a cap and said in a harsh voice. He said that he saved so much for those who were good for nothing and who worked just for filling their bellies and he could have saved much more for Lycidas who was far superior to these inferior poets who managed to enter the field of poetry by mere labour and without any inspiration. These lesser poets did not care for anything else except getting admittance to the company of poets. These were poetasters and joined the company of poets invited to the shearer's feast and turned out the real poets who were the real guests. They are just blind eaters and do not have any real ability to do the work of real poets. They do not know the art of writing poems and what do these people know about the importance of poets and poems They are urged towards writing poems not because they are inspired, but because they adopt versification as their profession and poems written by them are bright, but have no intrinsic worth. Their poems when adopted to singing sound rugged and harsh.

Lines 125—131. People who wanted good poems remained as unsatisfied as they were before. The music of these songs is poor and choked by mist and ruggedness. These versifiers are rotten and spread infection to others. They are like wolves with hidden paws who devour all that they come across. The stroke of criticism will always stand ready to strike them down.

Lines 132—144. Milton asks Alpheus to come back because the dead voice was gone and past. This was the reason why the streams had dried up and become smaller

than what they were before and the Muse of Sicily is asked to come back and call the valleys and ask them to bring forth the bells and flower garlands of many colours. The low lying valleys where small rivers flow and produce a murmuring sound and gush onwards. Cast all your bright eyes to this side and on the green turf and feed on the dew drops which are sweet to the grass and made purple all the earth with spring flowers. Bring the small red rose that grows alone in some lonely place, the tufted crow tree flowers, and pale coloured jessamine flowers, and white pink, and jet coloured pansies and the bright violet flowers.

Lines 145—155. There grow the dark coloured rose flowers and beautiful coloured woodbine trees and dim-coloured cow slip flowers which have heads that hang down. All flowers are fully decorated and tell *amaranthos* to shed all its show and decorations. Daffodil flowers which are cup-shaped are filled with dew drops. These flowers have blossomed so that with these the coffin of the great poet Lycidas may be decorated. Just for the sake of getting a little bit of ease and solace let them make a guess even though a false one.

Lines 156—164. Alas ! says the poet that he cannot afford to forget that while he was copmosing these verses the great poet Lycidas was being washed away by the waves of the ocean. Wherever the bones of Lycidas may be thrown, whether beyond the Hebrides Islands, where storms are constantly blowing. There Lycidas under the deep water of the ocean might be visiting the surface of the bottom of the fearful ocean or he may be sleeping quietly by the side of old Bellerus and his mourners were all the time weeping with wet eyes, but could not get him back. Perhaps the waters of the oceans had washed him as far away as the Namancos or Baycona seas. You may be looking homeward with sorrow. Milton requests the dolphins to look after the sad youth who had died so young.

Lines 165—174. Milton asks the other poets not to weep over the death of Lycidas because Lycidas may be

dead but the sorrow over his death was not dead. Though he may be sunk deep under the water of the ocean. The sun sinks in the water of the ocean towards the west yet very soon it appear again with a bowed and bent head. The sun comes out and scatters its rays all over the earth and with a new light makes the forehead of the earth bright and shining. In the same way Lycidas had sunk deep in the water but he may once again emerge brighter than before.

Lines 175—186. Through the power of God, who can walk over the waves of the ocean, Lycidas may come to life again and with life-giving drink he would wash the wet locks of Lycidas. In the Kingdom of joy and love *i.e.*, in heaven, happy songs are being sung on the arrival of Lycidas. Solemn meetings are held and happy societies meet to welcome him. These groups who have gathered to welcome him are singing and moving. These groups had come to bid him welcome and ask him to wipe his eyes clear of tears and weep no more because he would never have any further occasion to weep over his sad lot. Now the shepherds are requested by Milton to weep no more over the sad lot of Lycidas because from then onward Lycidas would be the guiding spirit of the shores and this would be the recompense for the loss suffered by him and he would act as the beacon light for the sailors who travel on those stormy seas.

Lines 187—194. Thus was sung this rude song by the rough youth to the forest and the rivulets while the morning had yet the newness of the early dawn. He touched the tender stops of his lyre and eagerly thinking sang a Doric song. By that time the light of the sun had spread all over the hills and then it sloped towards the bay in the west. At last he got up and clutched his grey cloak and said that the next day he would go to new forests and new grassy plains.

(5) Points to Remember

1. This poem is an elegy written on the death of Lycidas.

2. Edward King was a fellow student with Milton at the University.

3. King died in his youth and his elegy is a mourning song over his death.

4. Milton gave King the name of Lycidas.

5. King has been drowned in the stormy seas.

6. The poet in his imagination holds a tribunal and calls up the spirits of the seas.

7. The other poets are all sad over the untimely death of this promising poet.

8. The unhappy change had deprived the world of a young man who would have contributed a good deal to literature and poetry.

9. The woods, the pastures, the green leaves and flowers were all grieved over the loss of Lycidas.

10. The nymphs, when asked, said that they were away in some other part of the forest when this accident happened.

11. The death of Lycidas had proved that death did not pay any attention to the great qualities of Lycidas.

12. Lycidas had died while the lesser poets lived on.

13. The versifiers who were never inspired and who wrote verses just because they wanted to make a living did not contribute any thing of value to literature.

14. The god of wind admitted that the accident had been caused by the sea and not by the wind.

15. Neptune questioned the winds and the waves why they had drowned Lycidas.

16. Camus and the poilet of the Galilean sea also appeared before this court.

17. They all were sad over this death and loss to the world.

18. The other poets came singing and songs over the death of Lycidas.

19. God took pity over the sorrow and suffering of the other poets and told them that Lycidas had been blessed with immortality.

20. He told them that Lycidas had attained the peak of perfection and they should not weep over his death.

(6) Critical Appreciation

This is an elegy and is considered to be one of the best elegies of English literature. The criterion that determines the worth of an elegy is first its tense seriousness, an all pervading gloom and a brooding pensiveness. The poet begins from a particular sorrow and passes on to a general and universal feeling of loss. Gray's elegy is considered to be the best elegy in English litereture and the best feature about that poem is that Gray begins from a personal sorrow—the sense of loss felt by him at the death of his uncle-and this sorrow gives his feelings a tragic poignancy and this helps him to pass on to a universal and all applicable feeling for those who are dead and gone.

The same can be said about Shelley's poem Adonais and Milton's Lycidas. Both the poets were inspired by a feeling of sorrow over the death of friends. In the case of Milton it was the death of Edward King, a young man, who was a fellow university student. King was drowned while going in a boat. The elegy, like most other poems of Milton, is characterised by a faultless finish and perfection of form. The scholar in Milton is always upper most and his use of Greek and Roman mythological figures heightens the somber seriousness of the poem.

The poem was apparently inspired by the death of Edward King—Lycidas. The poet laments the untimely death of King but as we study the poem, we notice that Milton has in mind his own self. The poem is more an expression of the fear that he may die and thus poetry and literature may be deprived of his services and his valuable contribution. Edward King had never given any promise of becoming the great poet he is shown by Milton. He

was just an ordinary student of the University and never a very intimate friend of Milton's. The poem is, therefore, in many respects auto-biographical.

(7) Recapitulatory Questions

Q. 1. Write a note on the poetic diction of Lycidas, as pastoral elegy.

Ans. In "A Critical History of English Poetry" Herbert Grierson and J. C. Smith have observed :

" Lycidas is a pastoral elegy on King Edward who had been at college with Milton and was drowned in 1637. Criticisms of *Lycidas* are at bottom criticism of pastoral convention. 'Easy vulgar and therefore disgusting Johnson called it; but a convention to which we owe *Lycidas, Adonias* and *Thysis* needs no defence. It does not matter whether King and Milton had been close friends like Clough and Arnold, or barely acquainted like Keats and Shelley. *Lycidas* is not a cry of personal grief...The thought of the young priest's death makes him turn wrathfully on the corrupt elegy whom death has spared—but Judgment will not spare. These thoughts, not in themselves remarkable, are invested with a splendour of words and music that made Tannyson call *Lycidas* the touchstone of taste. It moves in successive waves of rising emotion, from each of which as it breaks, the poet retires to his pastoral ground." The pastoral imagery though not in detail is much impressive and charming.

In "A Short History of English Literature," Saintsbury remarks:"As an elegy deriving from the Alexandrian Sicilan School Lycidas has in its turn served as a model to other English dirges of the first interest, especially *Adonias*, but it exceed in variety and uniformity of merit and in the poetical quality of certain passages. No English poem exhibits a more exquisite harmony and variety of numbers, while very few of anything like the same length have a greater number of signal phrases memorable for thought or music. Indeed, except the untimely speach of St. Peter, which is at the very best a vigorous piece of satiric verse, there is not a

passage and hardly a line which is not mere and sheer poetry. The poem moreover, adds the knowledge of Milton's powers in several minor ways, especially in regards to his extraordinary skill in the use of names. Something of this had been seen before, but not to the excent of the wonderfull triplet—

> Sleep'st by the fable of Bellerus old,
> Where the Great vision of the guarded moment.
> Look towards Namancos and Baycona's hold.

The poet appeal of *Lycidas* is its poetry, which can never grow stale. Milton is a belated Elizabethan and in *Lycidas* he has caught-up the sum and excellence of Elizabethan poetry—the lilt and rythm, the sweet grace and the pensive tone of Spenserians. The last echoes of Elizabethan poetry die away with *Lycidas*. His word music and his cadences seem to be an inherited gift, and we seem to be hardly conscious of any artistry, employed by him.

Q. 2. What information does Lycidas give of Milton's youth and of his "friendship" with King at Cambridge University.

Ans. See Introduction of the Poem.

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6. ON HIS BLINDNESS

(1) The Poem

It is one of the marvels of human nature that the spirit of man can triumph over adversity, and in this respect this Sonnet of Milton is highly personal. The Sonnet was composed in 1650, when the poet had completely lost his eyesight. It has a solemn beauty—'the beauty ever belonging to the revelation of a great spirit.' The poet gives expression to his noble and dignified nature. The Sonnet reveals the nobility of the poet's mind. What a humble estimate the poet has of his own worth. He laments his blindness not because it has deprived him of the joy of beholding the beautiful sunlight but because he has been made incapable of rendering service to God. In this Sonnet Milton questions what service God expects of him whom He has deprived of the gift of sight. The poet finds consolation in the

thought that service of the mind is just acceptable to God as service of the body is. He finds comfort in the thought that those who humbly and patiently submit to the will of God serve Him best.

'They also serve who only stand and wait.'

They Sonnet is written after the Italian type. The rhyme arrangement is *a b b a*, *a b b a*, in the octave and *c d e*, *c d e* in the sestet.

(2) The Theme of the Poem

The theme of the poem is Milton's blindness. The poet laments his blindness and feels that he is not able to serve his Maker with the poetic gift with which he has been endowed. He questions what service God expects of him whom He has deprived of eye-sight. He gets an answer from within that God does not require man's work. He finds consolation in the thought that they, who humbly and patiently accept the will of God serve Him best.

(3) The Substance of the Poem

In this Sonnet Milton laments his own blindness. Milton became blind at the age of 35. He feels he cannot serve God, and the poetic gift is lying useless with him. He thinks that God will punish him for not making use of the poetic faculty. But the next moment Patience answers from within that God does not expect work from a blind man. He finds consolation in the thought that those who patiently and humbly resign themsevles to the will of God also serve Him as faithfully and devotedly as those who can actively work.

(4) Summary of the Poem

The poet feels sad to find that his eye-sight is gone before he has lived half his life in this dark and wide world. He feels that his natural gift with which he might serve God, is going unused. He questions himself, "Does God exact day-labour from a person who is blind ?" The answer comes from within that God does not want either the work of a man or the return of His own gifts. The poet finds

consolation in the thought that those who submit most patiently to the gentle decrees of God serve him as faithfully and devotedly as men of action. 'They also serve who only stand and wait.'

(5) A Brief Analysis of the Poem

The poet feels sad when he thinks that he has lost his eye-sight before half his life is done in this dark and wide world. He feels that he cannot serve God, as the poetic talent is lying useless with him. He thinks that God will punish him for not making use of the poetic faculty.

The poet questions himself, "Does God expect work from one who is deprived of eye-sight?" At once Patience answers from within, "God does not want man's work or the return of His own gifts. Those who most humbly and patiently accept the will of God serve Him as faithfully and devotedly as those who can actively work. God has thousands of angels at His command and they carry out His orders in no time. But those angels who patiently stand outside and watch for His orders serve Him equally faithfully." The poet, therefore, concludes that it is not active service alone but humble submission to the will of God that is acceptable to Him.

(6) Paraphrase

When I think how I have lost my eye-sight before half of my life is done in this dark and wide world and how the one gift which, it is an intellectual and spiritual death to conceal, is lying useless within me, although my soul is disposed to serve my creator with it and to give an exact account of myself (*i.e.*, to show to God how I have used His gift) for fear lest he should on his return scold me for my neglect and carelessness. I foolishly ask myself, "Does God demand work from one who is deprived of eye-sight?" At once the voice of Patience silences my complaint and replies, "God does not require man's work or the return of His gifts. Those who most patiently bear His gentle decree serve Him best. His dignity and government are royal. Thousand of angels are ever at His beck and call and hasten

restlessly over land and sea to carry out His commands. Hence those who patiently stand outside and wait for His orders serve Him equally faithfully."

Note. In this Sonnet Milton laments his own blindness. Milton became blind at the age of thirty-five. He feels he cannot serve God, and that the poetic talent is lying useless with him. He thinks that God will punish him for not making use of the poetic faculty. But the next moment, Patience answers from within that God does not expect work from a blind man. 'They also serve who only stand and wait.'

(7) Critical Appreciation

It is a poem of personal grief The subject of the poem is a strictly personal one. The poet gives expression to his grief and the doubts aroused in him because of his blindness. He laments over this loss and asks himself whether he would be punished by God for not making use of his gift of poetry, because of his blindness he consoles himself with the idea that though his blindness has deprived him of actual service, the willingness of his heart to serve God would bring him credit.

It is full of meekness and humility. In this manner the poet is able to raise his personal grief to a higher level and universalize it. The poem does not remain merely the cry of a blind man. It discusses the universal problem of the spirit being willing but the flesh being weak. It demonstrates how humble and meek we should be in our life.

It teaches resignation. The poem stresses the need of bowing our head before the decrees of God and resigning ourselves to His will. It teaches us that the true service of God lies in accepting His decrees meekly and without a murmur.

Its form and language. The sonnet follows the Italian model. Its rhyme-scheme is *a b b a, a b b a, c d e, c d e.* Its language is simple and touching and almost Biblical, so that it gives us the impression of sacredness and poetry.

Recapitulatory Questions

Q. 1. Milton expresses his own grief for the lost of his sight in his Sonnet "*On his Blindess*". Discuss.

Ans. See the "Theme" and "Critical Appreciation".

Q. 2. What is the problem before Milton and how does he resolve it ?

Ans. See Analysis of the Poem.

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7. OF MAN'S FIRST DISOBEDIENCE

(1) Introduction

Note :—The first 26 lines from *Paradise Lost Book-I* has been selected in your poetry book by the heading "*Of Man's First Disobedience*" as well as selected lines from *Paradise Lost-I* given heading "*The Fall of the Angels*".

Paradise Lost is rightly considered to be Milton's principal work, and in it his puritanical faith and belief in christianity are fully portrayed. The conception of the poem is Herbraic but the depiction of scenes that form the basis of the setting of the poem are purely English. The poet never becomes vague though some of his critics points out that the lawns and groves are too earthly to be divine or heavenly. He never lets anything to interpose itself between him and the Bible. He accepts the whole of Biblical history as authentic and sacred ; but he retells it from the point of view of a man who is burdened with the knowledge of contemporary life. Into this his intensely self-centered personality interposes time and again. We are ever conscious of his superior personality. The theme

of the poem may be sacred and divine : but it is told by an intensely self-conscious poet. The poem depicts a conflict between God and Satan and here Milton's religion came into conflict with his love for freedom. God is a glorified picture of the king of England and angels are drawn in imitation of the submissive courtiers of the king. Satan is shown as a rebel and embodies freedom and the spirit of rebellion against established authority. Satan is the character in the story through whose mouth most of the political opinions and love for liberty of the poet is expressed.

The style of the poem is Roman in concept. The meaning of words, the syntax and the use of particular phrases and meters is classical in style. The style is periodic and lines are un-rhymed and beauty of music is created by cadence and rise and fall of words. The language and diction are pure and the scholar's use of words is the most distinctive feature of the poem. There is constructive force, unity of design, concentration of effort which make it one of the most important English poems.

(2) Central Idea

The poet addresses the powers above to inspire him so that he might sing about human relations with God and heaven. The first thing he would discuss would be why Adam was forced to leave and come down upon the earth and who was the person who first brought about rebellion against God. The infernal serpent tempted Eve and brought about the fall of Adam. Satan was responsible for sending the evil serpent to tempt Adam and Eve. Satan had originally been put to shame and defeated ; but he took revenge by playing this trick on mankind and by misguiding God's best creation. Milton then goes on to describe paradise which was originally the home of man and discusses in detail the struggle for supremacy which had gone on for ever between the forces of good and the forces of evil. Satan with great audacity challenges God by holding out temptations to human being. The general impres-

sion that is left behind on the mind of the reader is that Satan enjoyed more favour with the writer and God is shown as subdued and weak by nature.

(3) Summary

Milton says that the poet while writing about *Paradise Lost* is concerned with man's fall from heaven. There had been a conflict between the forces of evil and the forces of good from times immemorial and Satan finally took revenge upon God by misguiding his best creation—man. Serpent was sent as the agent of temptation. Thus he engendered the spirit of revolt against God. Heaven had been the house of man. Its valleys, gardens and trees had been the places where man enjoyed a happy and gay life before his fall. He was, before his fall, dressed in a resplendent light. Though he had lost that field and could not get it now, but all was not lost and he may be able to get back his former glory. Apparently man had lost all his hold on divinity and appeared to have fallen a prey to evil ; but there was hope yet that he may be reclaimed.

God surrounded by his angels held his court and they thought and brooded over the fate that had befallen man.

(4) Paraphrase

Lines 1—17. The poet says that he was going to sing about the result of man's disobedience and the result of his temptation by Satan and loss of heaven. This fall of man from heaven was responsible for all his sufferings. Thus would man continue a fallen angel till Christ restored man to his former grandeur and got back to his happy place. The poet asks the muse of his poetry to sing religious song as was sung on the top of Oreb or Sinai. The first prophet who taught the first generation of mankind how heaven and earth came into beings. If the reader professed Sion Hill or Siloa's brook that flowed in the neighbourhood of the place where was present the Oracle God. He would get inspiration from that source and his imagination wanted to soar as high as it possibly could and sing about things that had previously never been subject matter of poetry.

Lines 18—27. The poet says that he addressed particularly the spirit that preferred prayers of upright and pure hearts. He asks that spirit to teach him because this spirit was present since the day the world came into being. This spirit pervaded all over the earth hovering it with outspread wings like a dove. This is the spirit which is present in the valleys and gives life to all things. The poet asks the spirit to give light to what was dark in him and whatever was low in him the spirit can ennoble and make great. The spirit may so inspire him as to enable him to rise up to his theme and be able to project God before his reader and interpret the ways of God before human beings.

(5) Critical Appreciation

The *Paradise Lost* is the master piece of Milton's literary achievements. It is an epic written in classical form. As regards to the theme of the poem it has been taken from the Bible. The first disobdience of man, his banishment from heaven, the Satan's rebellions against the great command of Almighty are the aspects of the poem. Milton successfully and artistically deals the serious theme of the poem.

The two poems have been slected from the *Paradise Lost*—"Of Man's First Disobdince" and the "Fall of the Angels".

In the "Disobedience of Man" Milton expresses that how man forgetting the order of his Creator eats the fruit of fo rb.dden tree. His fall from heaven is the result of his temp[1]tation by Satan. This fall from heaven was responsible for all his sufferings. Then Christ came and restored man to his former grandeur and got back his position. In the ,,Fall of the Angels" Milton introduces the great zeal of Satan for freedom.

He has also been fallen from heaven and is now facing the bitter circumstances. He rebelled against God and actively fought a war. But he was defeated by the power of God. In spite of the fact that he had been defeated by

God yet he encourged his companions to prepare themselves for the second war.

The treatment of the great epic, *Paradise Lost* is personal. We see Milton everywhere in this great epic. He stands contrasted with Shakespeare where objectivity is well-marked in all his plays. It is very difficult to say where Shakespeare is to be seen among his characters. But Milton can be seen throughout all the poem. The character of Milton is being represented in some aspects through the character of Satan. His spirit of rebellion against constituted authority and his love for liberty is put forth in the mouth of Satan. The reason for this obvious for Milton was the great champion of popular liberty in his own days. We will not be entirely wrong if we say that Milton himself is in every line of the *Paradise Lost*.

(6) Points to remember

(1) According to Milton the fall of Man from heaven is due to the disobedience of man.

(2) Christ restored man to his former grandeur and got back his happy place.

(3) The Poet's imagination wanted to soar as high as possibly could and sing about things which have never been the subject of poetry previously.

(4) He asks the spirit (Christ) to teach him, as it was present when the world came into being.

(5) The Poet requests the spirit to remove what is dark in him.

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8. THE FALL OF THE ANGELS

(1) Introduction

[See, the Introduction "Of Man's First Disobedience"].

(2) Paraphrase

Lines 1—29. Satan asked whether the land they had come to was the land which they had been able to get in place of Heaven from where they had been turned out. They had got darkness in place of light. He said that he could not help it because God who was all powerful and had the power and authority to dispose things as He thought fit. He said that it was better that he should be as far away from God as possible, because God had gained victory through the use of power and not because he was greater in wisdom. Satan said that he would not bid farewell to the joys and pleasures of Heaven and learn to live in that new home which was full of horrors of hell. He would live there but his mind would remain the same what it was before, and there would be no change in it. The mind is kingdom by itself and place or time cannot change it. This power of the mind can change hell into heaven. Satan said that he would continue to be his old self. He would be ruler in that land, he would be supreme but less in power than God who had won victory through thunder and by using power. He said that he hoped to be free here because Almighty was not the ruler of that land and he would not feel envy for the new power acquired by Satan. He would be able to reign in that land as supreme and God would not drive him away from that power. He would reign in that land in his own way. He was ambitious of being ruler though the land was worse than hell but in his opinion it was better to rule in hell rather than be a slave in heaven. Satan said it was not proper to let his companions and helpers lie inactive and forgetful of their past glory. They should not pass their time doing nothing. He said that he would once again rally his friends and associates and call them to work with him in that new land. In that new land they would once again reform themselves in battle order and once again try their luck. They would once again fight against God and would either get back heaven or go to hell worse than the one they lived in.

Lines 30—41 Satan said all this and Beelzebuly said

in reply"O leader of that bright and powerful army which none else but God could have defeated ! If those friends and associates were once to hear your voice again and heard those promises of hopes and fear which you can hold out to them and if they were to hear to your voice once again they would feel inspired. They had fought under your guidance and had faced so many dangers and had fought so bravelly against the enemy. They had attacked bravely at your orders and under your guidance. They would get a new courage and be revived and fight. They were lying inactive just then on the shores of that lake of fire and were amazed and astounded because they had fallen from great heights".

Lines 42—72. Beelzebub had said this much when he stopped and Satan stood up and moved towards the shore. His big and broad shield hung at his back. It was round and very big and hung from his shoulder like a moon. This round ball is seen by Tuscan artists in the evening from the top of Fesole or in Valdarns. They see in it new lands, rivers and hills on the spotted surface of the moon. The spear that Satan carried was very long, as long as the tallest pine that grew on the hills of Norway or it was like the tall mast of some big ship. To Satan this huge spear appeared a wand which he carried easily in his hand. It was with the help of this spear that he walked on the burning earth with shaking steps. He appeared to have been adversely affected by the over hot climate of the land in which he had to live. He put up with all this and stood on the shore of fire and called his armies which were made of angels who had fallen from heaven and now lay scattered. These angels were dazed on account of the defeats they had suffered and now lay where they were covered by the fallen leaves of trees. These were autumnal leaves that lie scattered on the banks of rivers of Vallambrosa or in the Etrurian forests which rise up very high or like the tall grass that is up rooted by voilent and stormy winds when these blow on the Red sea where waves overthrow Busiris or Memphian bravery. They pursued with enemity those who lived in the land of Goshen who saw calmly from the safety of the sea

shore the floating dead bodies and broken wheels of carriages. It was in this broken and helpless condition that lay the followers of Satan. They lay scattered all over the sea and were quite dazed and broken by their reverses and defeats.

Lines 73—89. Satan called his companions in such a loud voice that the hollow and deep land echoed to his call. He called, "O princes, rulers, soldiers, who are the pick and choice of all things in heaven, you were at one time denizens of heaven, but now you have lost your place there. If you, who are immortal spirits of heaven, can be so much affected by wonder and astonishment, it is most unbefitting to your dignity. Or have you selected the shores of this lake for taking rest and are feeling tired after your recent conflict. Do you feel comfort by resting there as if you were in the valleys of heaven. Or have you decided to lie there in that posture and now admit subservience to God, who was now seeing us as agents of revolt, rolling here in the lake and our arms and banners scattered all over the area. The servants of God will observe this abject condition of us rebel angels and they would again attack us and trampel us under foot. They would hurl thunder-bolts at us and transfix us to the bottom of the lake. You should get up and have courage and make one more effort."

Lines 90—114. The follower of Satan heard these words of their leader and felt ashamed and stirred just as people who are asleep are awakened when they find that their leader had detected them and found un-mindful of their duty. They also observed in what sad condition they were and also felt acutely the pain they were suffering from. In numerable number they rallied to the call of their leader. They were as large in number as were the locust swarms that were called up by the son of Amraus, who had called these swarms as a punishment for Pharoah in the days when evil held sway in Egypt. These swarms of locusts covered up the whole Egypt like a dark cloud. This swarm of locusts hung like a cloud on the land of Nile and converted day into a night. As the locusts were countless in number so were the followers of Satan, these rebel angels were seen

hovering on wings under the covering of fire of hell. They could be seen in the upper, lower and surrounding fires. Thus they waited until the spear of their leader waved high up in the air and gave the signal for directing their course. They balanced themselves and landed on the solid surface of stone and their members crowded the whole of that plain. Their number was so great that never before such large numbers had come from the cold and frozen regions of the north. Their number was greater even than the number of Huns who had crossed the rivers Rhine and Danube to attack lands to the south of these rivers and had spread all over the lands of Gibraltar and Libya.

Lines 115—121. Then the commanders of all the lands and squadrons came up to the place where their leader was standing. They had shapes and forms of gods and looked superior to human beings and had the grandeur of princes and rulers. They were powerful angels who a short while before sat on thrones in heaven. Though now no mention was made of their names in heaven. Since they had rebelled against God their names had been erased from the book of heaven. Among the mankind they had as yet not been included.

(3) Critical Appreciation

See Critical Appreciation "Man's First Disobedience".

(4) Points to Remember

(1) Satan asked, whether the land from which they had come would be allotted to them in place of heaven.

(2) Satan wanted to be as far away from God as possible.

(3) God gained victory through use of power and not wisdom, mind is more superior to power because it can change hell into heaven.

(4) I shall be free here as Almighty is not the ruler of this land.

(5) Freedom is blessing. It is better to rule in hell than to serve in heaven.

(5) Recapitulatory Questions

Q. 1. What were the consequences of Man's First Disobedience of God ?

Q. 2. Is it correct to say that Satan is Milton ? Discuss on the base of the Poem.

Q. 3. The Satan is mouth-piece of Milton. Analyse.

Ans. See Critical Appreciation and Introduction also.

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9. HAIL, HOLY LIGHT

(1) Introduction.

This is a piece from Milton's *Paradise Lost*, Book III. *Paradise Lost*, the greatest English poem was written as an exposition of Milton's theology 'asserting Eternal Providence and justifying the ways of God to men.' It is an epic poem but it does not iack dramatic elements. As a matter of fact Milton goes beyond all previous epics in his approximation to dramatic form. Not only is there an immense body of actual dialogue in the poem, but the atterances are, on the whole, less static than is common in earlier epics and more responsive to the situation. The setting is more often brought before us, not in the narrative, but through description put into the mouths of the characters in the scene.

To claim for Milton a genuine, though limited, dramatic faculty is not to deny him the epic faculty. The truth remains that he is first and foremost an epic poet. His figures may be called historic parallels, whereby the names and incidents of human history are made not so much to elucidate as to ennoble the less familiar names and incidents of his prehistoric theme. He maintains dignity and distance by choosing comparisons from ancient history and mythology, or from those great and strange things in nature which repel intimacy,—the moon, the stars, the sea,

etc. The extract in this collection is an invocation to the spirit of Celestial Light, the bright essence, which existed when nothing else existed except the Creator, Himself nothing but light.

(2) Summary

I send you greetings, O Holy Light, pure and unblemished, which issued forth from the radiance co-eternal with the Eternal Being. You existed even before the creation of the firmament and the universe and dawned upon this dark earth after God created it by His fiat. I have visited you after undertaking the hard and rare feat of venturing into darkness of chaos and eternal Night, but on account of my physical blindness my eyes are moving in vain to seek your penetrating rays but they get no illumination. I cannot see the day, the beautiful dawn or sunset, the flowers or anything else around me. The entire book of knowledge of this world is closed to me. Therefore, O Holy Light, throw your rays upon me and illuminate my mind with your lustre so that after dispelling all the mists of doubts within me, I may be able to see and tell such things to the world which are indiscernible to the ordinary human beings.

(3) Paraphrase

Lines 1—5. Salutations to you, Holy Light, first-born Child of Heaven, or of the radiance co-eternal with the Eternal Being (*i.e.*, God Almighty). May I call you unblemished since God Himself is nothing but light and lived since eternity nowhere else but in the unapproachable light. Thus He lived in you—the bright stream issuing forth from the dazzling source of uncreated light.

Lines 6—12. O celestial stream of holy light, will you listen to the source from which you emanated if one may tell you so? You existed before the creation of the sun and the heavens, and by the fiat of God you adorned like a cloak this world of dark and deep water then forming out of vacant and formless infinity.

Lines 13—21. I visit you, O Holy Light again with stronger spirit after escaping from the lower world although I had long been detained there and lived an obscure life. During the course of my flight through the utter darkness of chaos and middle darkness surrounding the outside of Hell, I sang in praise of Chaos and eternal Night on the Orphean Lyre which the heavenly Muse had taught me for venturing down into the dark descent and then to ascend up hard and rare those feats might be.

Lines 22—26. I have revisited you safely and feel your supreme and powerful source now; but you do not reach my eyes which are moving about in vain to find your penetrating rays and yet get no illumination. It looks as if some scorching light has entered into my eyes like a thick drop of some burning liquid and extinguished their balls for good, or some dark curtain has fallen all over them.

Lines 27—40. Yet, smitten with the love of sacred song, I do not cease any more to wander about clear springs, shady groves and sunny hills where the Muses haunt; but I visit every night chiefly you the Heaven and the flowery brooks below you which wash your holy feet and flow with musical tunes. (In my ecstacy) I sometimes forget those blind poets and prophets of Greece like Thamysis, Maeonides, Tiresias and Phineus with whom I was equal both in fate and fame. Then carried by my thoughts, harmonious words come voluntarily out of me like the wakeful birds singing its nightly note huddled in some obscure corner in the darkness.

Lines 41—55. Thus with the passage of the year the seasons return, but to me (a blind person), neither the day returns, nor can I witness the beautiful twilight of evening or morning, nor the sight of spring blossoms or summer rose, nor even anything like the flocks, or herds or any pious human face; but instead an ever-enduring cloud of darkness surrounds me and cuts me off from the cheerful activities of men by closing upon me the beautiful book of the knowledge of the world. Thus, with all the works of nature expunged and errased for me, I am presented with

a universal blank, and the wisdom of the world is totally shut out for me by closing my eyes to them. So, you the Holy Light, may in the same degree, shine within me and adorn my mind with all your lustre, bestowng me thus, inward eyes clear of all mists of doubts, so that I may be able to see and tell of those things which are beyond the pale of human eyes.

(4) Critical Appreciation

This short extract is taken from book III of *Paradise Lost*, the greatest English poem by common consent. "*Paradise Lost* is written as an exposition of his theology, upon the foundation of that theology it undertakes to assist Eternal Providence and justify the way of God to man." But if as a thinker and moralist he now completely belonged to Puritanism, as an artist he had not ceased to belong to the Renaissance, and its form and style, its machinery and method, the poem everywhere takes us back to Milton's avowed models, the great epics of classical antiquity, whilst the vast and varied learning which is built into its fabric, shows how fondly, in the blindness and loneliness of his old age, he recalled the wide secular studies of his happy earlier days. Even now, then, the Puritan in Milton had not killed the humanist.

These lines are dedicated to the praise of the holy light, the first born, co-eternal with God. There is a note of pathos in this praise because the poet was himself bereft of this blessing and produced all his great work in his blindness. He feels at once with the celebrated blind figures of old—the blind Thamysis, the blind Maeonides, the blind Tiresias and the blind Phineus. However, he is not too pessimistic; he derives solace from the fact that on the wings of fancy and imagination he can fly to lands unknown and picture to himself the beauty spots of the earth;

> Yet not the more
> Cease I to wander where the Muses haunt.
> Clear spring, or shady grove, or sunny hill.
> Smit with the love of sacred song.

Though the cycle of seasons goes on yet he remains blind to the ever-changing panorama. But the poet appeals to the Holy Light to illumine his spirit within. Thus he plucks courage of his sad plight and strikes a note of victory out of a sense of frustration in life.

The poem exhibits a lack of definite and conscious rhyme, yet there is a rhythm and flow in the lines which is the very characteristic of natural art.

Recapitulatory Questions

Q. 1. Comment on the personal element which you find in Hail, Holy Light.

Ans. Reproduce the Introduction of the Poem.

Q. 2. What are the striking features of the Poem?

Ans. See Critical Appreciation.

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10. SAMSON AGONISTES

(1) Introduction of the Poem

Samson Agonistes is a tragedy written in dramatic form by Milton. The story of Samson has been taken from Bible, the book Judges. This is a sacred drama revealing the Samson's revenge upon the Philistines. Samson was a man of extra-ordinary power. The whole strength of Samson lay hidden in his hair and that was not known except his wife. She was a Philistine and betrayed her husband by disclosing the secret of Samson's strength to Philistine's lords. Thus with the treason of his wife he was captured by the Philistines. They made him blind to make him less dangerous. They kept him in the prison at Gaza. There his friends and his old father Manoa came to console him and assured him to get him released from the prison. At the occasion of annual fair which was celebrated by the Philistines lords to please their god (dogon), Samson was also fetched there for the performance of feast of strength. Samson brought the

destruction of Philistines lords by pulling down the pillars which were the main support of the roof of the church under which they were sitting. He, too, gave his life then and there.

(2) Paraphrase

Lines 1—7. Samson's father Manoa addresses to his companions that there is no need of mourning at the death of Samson. He was a hero and he gave his life heroically by getting his revenge upon the Philistines. Now they will mourn at the loss of their heads in the years to come. Philistine tribes will lament at the death of the sons of Captor.

Lines 8—13. The death of Samson is the honour for Israel because by the sacrifice of Samson Israels got their freedom. This is the occasion of pride for them and not for lamentation.

They should held the courage. They should know that Samson is now in his eternal home with God. This home is happiest home than that of this baseless earth. He is free there from all ties.

Lines 14—17. There is nothing for weeping and lamenting and putting blame to any one. We should not show our weakness by being disappointed at the death of Samson. His death is noble death and is wealth of honour for us. What had happened was well, fair and right.

Lines 18—25. Now let us stop weeping and find out his dead body where it lay buried under the roof. His body has been washed out with blood of his enemies like cleaning shrub. I want to proceed immediately to Gaza and that is not too far. You should inform all my friends and well-wishers to attend the sacred funeral function of Samson.

Lines 26—37. Samson now will live at his father's house without being disturbed. I intend to grow laurel and palm trees around his tomb. Their evergreen branches

would spread shadow over his grave. Then this tomb would be a subject of lyrical songs and legends. Samson's memory would inflame the hearts of his enemies who was a man of worth, value and matchless power. The young ladies will also pay their visit to the tomb of my son (Samson) with the gift of flowers. They will lament over his unfortunate lot for being deprived from love, captivity and loss of eyes.

Lines 38—41. Everything that happens in our life is best though in the beginning we often distrust the changes and events brought about by the mysterious (ununderstandable) scheme of the Highest Wisdom (God); in the end, however, we always realise that all that has come about is right.

Lines 42—47. There are occasions when it seems that God's grace has left His faithful servants, but at the proper time it comes back to him unexpectedly and gives glorious support to the devout believer. It is on account of this heavenly help given to Samson, that the whole city of Gaza and all those enemies of Israel who gather together in order to oppose the insuperable will of God, are in grief.

Lines 48—51. So far as His humble servants, the friends of Samson, are concerned, He (God) has sent them away from this great event with a new acquisition of true experience, with peace and satisfaction and calm of mind without any trace of passion remaining in their hearts.

(3) Summary

Manoa, father of Samson, console his companions at the death of Samson. He says that his death (Samson's) is a wealth of pride for us. We should not lament at the death of Samson because he was brave and he gave his life heroically.

Now Philistines will mourn at the death of their sons by the hands of Samson.

We should proceed to Gaza to find out his dead body. His tomb and his popularity would be a perpetual strain

for Philistines. It is an occasion of pride for us as Samson will be remembered in legends and songs. The Chorus says that every thing is best though we doubt very often. Although God hides his face yet He sometimes visits unexpectedly the minds of the faithful champions of His cause. He infuses their mind with peace and calmness.

(4) Critical Appreciation

Samson Agonistes is a classical in form but its theme, outlook and temper is Hebraic. It makes the consummation of Milton's puritanism. It completely dominates by the spirit of puritanism.

Tucker Brooke points out the following literary qualities of the play, *Samson Agonistes*. After mentioning Milton's close proximity with the Greek dramatists he says, "These things, however wonderful and even unique though they are in a modern poem; would not make *Samson Agonistes* a vital English tragedy without the religious tone, which is not archaic but of the seventeenth century, and without the individuality of Samson's character, which is deeply Miltonic. Like Milton, Samson is a dedicated soul :

A person rais'd
With strength sufficient and command from Heav'n
To free my country.

Like Milton he has been embittered by an unwise marriage, has suffered blindness, and been delivered into the hand of godless enemies ; and like Milton he is grappling humbly with the problem of God's justice and the question 'Doth God erect day-labor light denied.' This is distinctively a poem of old age, and for Milton curiously unadorned. It has little excitement, and discloses its subtle beauties only after repeated readings, for they depend on delicate psychological strains and stresses. It belongs with nothing to the Elizabethan or the Restoration age. In theme it is wholly Hebraic *i. e.*, belonging to the sacred themes in Hebrew, the language of the Jewish sacred books) ; in structure wholly Greek ; and in effect it is the

most autobiographical and (though Christ is never mentioned) the most movingly Christian thing that Milton wrote—at least since the early ode, ***On the Morning of Christ's Nativity***.

Milton had taken upon himself the great task of "justifying the ways of God to mend, and the fifty-one lines selected in this poem are embodiment of that task. They breathe a firm conviction in the ultimate victory of Good, and Righteousness, the path of Truth and Honour. Also, there is a cheerful optimism that though we may not be able to understand the great scheme of the universe, yet everything is meant for the best. Our doubts are vain and useless. The poet believes that God Almighty bestows the minds of His faithful with a sense of calm and peace. It is a poem of faith and hopefulness.

(5) Recapitulatory Questions

Q. 1. Analyse the character of "Manoa" and criticise his speech to his companions.

Q. 2. There is a chorus in the end of Samson Agonistes, what message the poet has conveyed to the man ?

Ans. 1 & 2, See Critical Appreciation.

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KEY QUESTIONS

Q. 1. What are the important qualities of Milton's diction? Illustrate from his poems included in your poetry book.

Ans. Milton was a great scholar. He was well-grounded in Latin language and literature and was fully conversant with the classical art of Greece. He was also a keen student of the Bible. 'There was no other English poet who was at once so profoundly religious and so much an artist.' His moral ardour and supreme egoism, his learning in classical literature and art and his thorough study of the Bible—all contributed towards the building of a chaste, splendid and grand diction for which Milton is so well known.

1. Intimate fusion of sense and sound. 'Milton possessed an absolute perfection in the choice of words and sonorities. In *L'Allegro and Il Penseroso* there is an intimate blending of the sound with sense, which makes Milton the most untranslatable of English poets. There is no apparent effort after imitative harmony. The moods of the spirits of Mirth and Melancholy are described with perfect fidelity to their state. Compare for example.

> Come and trip it as you go
> On the light fantastic toe

with the parallel lines from *Il Penseroso*,

> With even step and musing gait,
> And look commercing with the skies.
> The rept soul sitting in thine eyes.

2. Grandeur of his diction. Milton is known for the massive grandeur of his diction. The rapid volume of the sonorities in his verse sweep on like a mighty current. In his ode to Milton, Wordsworth describes his diction in these words; 'Thou had a voice whose sound was like the sea.' His powerful style and a majesty and sublimity about it, which has never been surpassed by any other English poet. The moderns with whom Milton has fallen

into disfavour due to his almost intolerable egotism and ascetic austerity regard his diction as rhetoric-stiff, tortuous and metallic.

3. Its verbal harmony. Milton had a fastidious ear for music—an ear which had been rendered more sensitive to the beauty of sound due to his blindness. A rich melody or verbal harmony is an important characteristic of his diction. Here and there we have the solo music of a skylark, but Milton's music generally is solemn, complicated and massive like the one coming from the orchestra or the rolling chant of a cathedral organ.

In the poems included in the selection such as L'Allegro, Il Penseroso and Hail, Holy Light etc. Milton seems to have mastered his instrument (*i.e.*, his poetic diction) to such a point that he could write free verse, obeying no law but his own. This heroic line gives place from time to time to a short line; rhymes follow no fixed order; there are neither couplets nor stanzas, but rhymes variously and flexibly interlaced and occasional unryhmed lines. The only rule is that of the poet's exquisite ear. The echoing sounds cross each other capriciously, now widely separated, now suppressed, now repeated in obedience to the poet's melodic sense...the result is a marvel of liquid, blended harmony, whence monotony has been expelled.

4. The vagueness of his imagery. Though his blindness increased his sensitiveness to the beauty of sound and helped him create subtle auditory effects is certainly deprived him of his sensuousness. He was at his best in the description of huge voids; black empty spaces, mighty phenomena, gigantic figures: but he could not create a clearest visual impression. Hence the vagueness and lack of outline in his imagery. While admitting this vagueness, we must not forget that there are passages in *Paradise Lost* which are quite well known for their splendid gorgeousness.

5. The purity of his diction. Milton chastens his diction by the strict restraint he exercises in the practice of

the art. He uses all the resources of the English language enriched by the Elizabethan treasure. Among the riches at his disposal, he makes a severe choice. He keeps only the exquisites, reaches the utmost limits of stylistic effect, but never lapse into 'obscurity or bad taste.' This characteristic of his diction is quite perceptible in ***Hail, Holy Light*** included in the text.

6. Lack of emotional warmth. Milton being a Puritan by creed abhorred passion and excess of all sorts. He has a kind of intellectual appeal but he lacks emotional warmth, though he possessed enough religious fervour. Due to this lack of emotional warmth, and the strict restraint practised by him in the exercise of his art, his diction though mighty and sonorous, lacks that force, impetuosity and fire which are associated with the name of Byron.

Of all the English poets, Milton is, perhaps the most careful and conscientious artist. The design and structure of his poems, the pattern of imagery used in them, the harmony between language and thought, sense and sound, the metrical perfection and his chaste, grand diction—show the hand of a master artist. His poems have an architectural structure built according to plan.

Q. 2. Write a note on Milton's literary achievements on basis of the poems in your course ?

Note : The answer of this Question produces in the critical appreciation on the following : "On Morning of Christ's Nativity, Lycidas, Comus (a Mask), L'Allegro and Il Penseroso" etc.

Ans. The first period of Milton's literary achievement, which brought out "On the Morning of Christ's Nativity", "L'Allegro", " Il Penseroso", "Lycidas" and "Comus", reveals to us his earlier poetry. This body of work is marked by two qualities : ***an extraordinary degree of poetic merit***, and ***a still more extraordinary originality of the poetic kind*** Although Milton is always Milton, it would be difficult to find in another writer five poems so different from each other and yet of such high merit. And it would

be still more difficult to find poems as independent in their excellence. Neither the influence of Ben Jonson nor the influenee of Donne—the two poetical influences in the air at the time, produced even the *faintest* permanent effect on Milton. "He has teachers but no models; masters but only in the way of learning how to do, not what to do." Yet one cannot avoid mentioning that the ***style of Milton's earlier lyric suffers from artificiality of imagery and excessive ornamentation*** which habit he got from 'Metaphysical' poets.

The first poem that he wrote is "*On the Morning Of Christ's Nativity*," which shows a slight overdose of ornament and especially in an inartistic conclusion. It is now and then marked by conceits. It is made up of two or three central thoughts, which form the backbone of the poem and are then illustrated with a great wealth of allusion. No English lyric poem yet written had shown anything like the same power of concentrating numbers of thoughts, proceeding from different sources, upon a single object, or of fusing a multitude of various images into an organic whole. "In his first important poem, what in other hands might have been a mere telling of the old human and earthly story of the first Christmas night, becomes in Milton's a vision of all time and all space, with heaven in it, and the stars, and the music of the spheres, and the great timeless scheme of redemption with which he was to have so much to do later, with history, too, and literature, the false gods of Old Testament and of the Greek and Roman classics already anticipating the parts they were to play in *Paradise Lost*".

"*L'Allegro*" and "*Il Penseroso*" are among the few things about which there is no difference of opinion, which are as delightful to childhood as to criticism, to youth as to age. These two descriptive poems are a pair of cabinet pictures, the one the complement and counter-part of the other.

It is in "Comus" (*A Mask*) that Milton's poetical power is at its greatest height. "Comus" is a masque. The heroine, 'The Lady,' loses her brothers in a forest and is taken

captive by the lewd god; whose arts, however, can avail nothing against one guarded as she is by chastity and virtue; by the help of a spirit, who watches over her, and of Sabrina, the nymph of the Severn, her brothers find and release her, wresting the magician's poisonous draught from him and putting him and his crew to flight. In this way Milton *Allegorically* depicts the endeavour of incontinent vice to overcome and corrupt virtue; it is even suggested that the "Revel god is a representative of those whom the poet actually regarded as the living votaries of the view of life which he abhorred." *In "Comus" the wild license of court life is set over against the grave and temperate virtue of puritan life.*

Lycidas was written towards the close of Milton's residence at Horton. This is the last poem of his earlier poetry. *Lycidas*, as an elegy of under two hundred lines, is one of the glories of English literature. But the poem has a universal appeal. The poet's real subject is not the death of Edward King: "It is the death of all who have been or will be loved in all the world, and the sorrow of all the survivors, the tragic destiny of youth and fame, the doom of frailty and transience which has been eternally pronounced on so many of the fairest gifts of nature and all the noblest works of man."

In form and method "Lycidas", like "Comus", is directly connected with the Renaissance and its classicism. It belongs to the kind of poetry which we call the pastoral elegy; it is an elegy in the shape of a song sung by a shepherd mourning for a dead companion, and is full of conventional bucolic imagery. For origin of this particular type of elegy one has to go back to the pastoral poetry of later Greek literature. Milton in "Lycidas" instead of expressing directly his sorrow for the loss of his friend, adopts the convention of a lamenting shepherd, the bucolic tone and manner which had become inseparable from the elegaic tradition, and all the necessary pastoral details of the well-established academic form. It is important to lay stress upon the purely derivative character of Milton's machinery,

and refer this to its true sources, as otherwise one would be very apt to find fault with the poem, as Dr. Johnson found fault with it, for want of nature and truth. Milton and Edward King never tended sheep together; the whole setting of the poem is a piece of elaborate and unconvincing make-believe. But we must remember that in sort of criticism we are expressing the taste of the time, and are making no allowance for that of Milton's age, and that to him and to his classically trained readers, what seems to us so artificial, appeared perfectly natural and fitting. Like "Comus", "*Lycidas*" is a product of the *art and learning of the Renaissance*; but also like *Comus* though in a far more direct and obvious way, it is the vehicle of a *religious and ethical spirit* which is fundamentally foreign to that art and learning. In *Lycidas* Milton is at length definitely Puritan; his Puritanism is no longer merely implicit as a pervading influence but is specific, militant, ecclesiastical.

Q. (3) (A) Give the characteristics from the literary point of view of the poem "Hail, Holy Light".

(B) What are the different aspects in which Milton views in this poem?

Ans. (A) The characteristics of the poem from the literary point of view are :—

(*a*) The stately march of the blank verse, (*b*) a dignity that we met with only in classical poetry, (*c*) refined sentiments of a finished scholar, (*d*) a religious fervour with a touch of austere puritanism, (*e*) a lofty self-consciousness and pious resignation, and (*f*) an almost unapproachable sublimity.

(B) The different aspects are :—

(*a*) Celestial light in its potential stage existing in eternity before Creation. (*b*) Physical light as the first Creation of God, which made this world so beautiful and comfortable and, which the poet does not possess, (*c*) Spiritual light that illumines the soul and teaches spiritual truths. In this sense light is holy. (*d*) Intellectual light or mental enlightenment which is the source of poetic inspiration.

JOHN DRYDEN—(1631—1700)

John Dryden was born in the vicarage Aldwinale, All Saints in 1631. He was the son of a prominent Puritan family in Northampton Shire, some members of which had seen active service in government commissions under Cromwell. He went to the Westminster School in London and from there as King's Scholarship holder to Trinity College, Cambridge from where he took his B. A. degree in 1654 After several years of study of the Classic and English poetry, he settled in London to pursue a literary. His first notable work was *Heroic Stanzas on the Death of Cromwell* written in 1658. Two years later in 1660 (the year of Restoration) he wrote *Astrea Redux*, a poem in which he celebrated the return of Charles II. The change of political faith shown in these two poems, was perhaps less important than his manifest, ability to transform current events into literary expression.

When the theatres were re-opened with the coming of Charles II, Dryden began to write for the stage, which was then the only profitable field for any one, who had to depend for his livelihood on his pen. During the next fifteen years except the period from 1665-66 when the theatres were closed due to the Plague, he devoted himself almost exclusively to writing plays. In 1663 Dryden married Lady Elizabeth Howard, eldest daughter of the Earl of Berkshire. It was at his father-in-law's country house at Wiltshire that he, having retired there, to escape the Plague, planned his *Essay of Dramatic Poesie* and wrote *Annus Mirabilus* (or the year of wonders), a narrative poem describing the terrors of the great fire in London and some other events connected with the disgraceful war with Holland. He had already been honoured by election to the Royal Society and was appointed Poet Laureate in 1668 and Royal Historiographer in 1670. A personal connection with the aristocratic society, the support and patronage of the king and lastly success seems to vouchsafe him a brilliant social position.

He wrote some fifteen plays between 1668—1681. Of these the most important are the " *Tyrannic Love* or the *Royal Martyr*, *Almanzoor* or the *Almohide* or the *Conquest of Granada* and *Aurangzeb*. His best play and his first drama in blank verse, *All for Love* is a version of the story of Antony and Cleopatra.

In 1681, Dryden opened a new chapter in his career with the publication of first of his great satires in verse, *Absalom* and *Achitophel*. Now began the period of his satiric and didactic poems. His first political satire was followed by other works of the same character and later by theological poems.

In Religio Laici (Religion of a Layman) he defended the Anglican Church against the Catholics, without having given any premonitary sign of such an impulse. He explains in verse the reason which led him to prefer the Anglican faith. Some years later he refuted his first thesis and wrote his *Hind and Panther* demonstrating at great length the superiority of Roman Catholicism. In the interval a Catholic King James II had mounted the throne. Did the inner working of Dryden's thought have led him freely from one attitude to another? Though his enemies accused him of hypocricy and time serving in thus changing his faith, yet everything permits of such a supposition. The more so when we consider how he remained true to the faith through the Revolution of 1688 and courageously put up with the loss of pension and official favour and resumed his literary talks with true stoical dignity.

" All hopes of official recognition now being destroyed Dryden now devoted himself for his remaining years to literature with praise-worthy courage and industry. This part of his life was occupied largely with translations. He translated in verse Persians, the satires of Juvenal, the whole of Virgil and parts of Horace, Ovid, Homer, Theocritus and Lucretius. His translation of Virgil was very successful and brought him £1200. He wrote his famous second '*Songs for St. Cecilia's Day*' (the first song for St. Cecilia Day was published in 1687) entitled *Alexander's*

Feast for a musical society in 1697 ; he thought it the best of all his poetry. His last great work was the collection of paraphrases of tales by Chaucer. Boccaccio and Ovid called Fables Ancient and Modern with a delightful preface late in 1699 shortly before his death in 1700. Dryden was buried in the Westminster Abbey in Chaucer's grave."

Dryden as a Poet : According to Scott, Dryden may claim at least the third place in the list of English classic-writers, the first and the second being accorded to Shakespeare and Milton. Though Dryden was a highly versatile genius being a dramatist, a satirist, a critic and a prose writer, yet he was a poet first and foremost. He is a successor of Johnson, and therefore the descendant of Marlowe ; he is the ancestor of all that is best in the poetry of the Eighteenth Century. Once we have mastered Dryden—and by mastery is meant a full and essential enjoyment, not the enjoyment of a private whimsical fashion—we can extract whatever enjoyment and edification there is in his contemporaries—Oldham, Denham......Waller ; and still more his successors—not only Pope, but Phillips, Churchill, Gray, Johnson, Cowper and Goldsmith. His inspiration is prolonged in Crabbe and Byron; it even extends, as Mr. Van Doren points out, to Poe. Even the poets, responsible for the revolt against classicism were well acquainted with him. Wordsworth knew his work, and Keats invoked his aid. We cannot fully enjoy or rightly estimate a hundred years of English poetry unless we fully enjoy Dryden.........an elegy on the death of young Lord Hastings, written when he was eighteen, was almost incredibly bad, his Heroic Stanzas, written he was twenty seven, though they contained a few fine lines and images, were crude and bombastic. In the early stages of his poetical career he was under the spell of Cowley whom he afterwards described as 'the darling of my youth' and as a result all the absurdities of the metaphysical school abound in these early works. They servive even in Annus Mirabilus in which he indulges from time to time in the most fantastic conceit.........but its faults are numerous and glaring, the

masculine vigour and lucidity of the poem reveal an immense development in the writer's genius. For the full exhibition of his powers, however, we have to turn to the work of the last twenty years of the life, in which his emancipation from the false taste of the metaphysical writers is complete and his style on longer turbid and chocked with all sorts of rubbish, flows clear and strong.

(*T. S. Eliot*)

Dryden was a full-fledged Classicist and his writings marked the definite establishment of the Classical School of poetry. "He had a sincere and keen linking for a form that is pure, for the neat line, for the even balancing of a whole. He felt that the masterpieces of ancient Greek and Roman poets, had these merits. He also perceived it in the writings of his French contemporaries. Thus in the school of the ancient and modern masters, he caught the desire and adopted the habit of a refinement of taste, and under their influence, his verse, his lyricism and his dramatic art tended towards Classicism".

Special Feature of his Poetry

Dryden is chiefly the poet of the Restoration Period—an age which was Classical in the literary tendencies and his poetry alike in its limitations and in its merits, is thoroughly representative of the age. He has very little imaginative vigour, still less depth of feeling and no spiritual fervour, and only rarely is it that it has a lyrical note. It is so to say deficient in what the Romantics felt to be the equalities essential for all first rate poetry. This Romantic tradition has managed to survive into the twentieth. This is the reason why Pope and Dryden have continued to be classified as mere versifiers, however subtle and skilful they may be regarded as writers. Matthew Arnold says about Dryden and Pope that their poetry is conceived and composed in 'their wits'. Modern critics are sounding a departure from the past in so far that they hold up for criticism the subject matter of the Classical poets rather than the poet. They say that credit should be given to these poets

for the great successes achieved by them in the field of poetry with the most unpoetic subject matter they were forced by literary tradition of the day to deal with. Dryden is, therefore not to be condemned for his unpoetic material ; but he should rather be prized for what he made of it. "Much of Dryden's unique merit consists in his ability to make the small into great, the prosaic into the poetic, the trivial into the magnificent. This is particularly true of the satirical portraits, which for their delicate touches and picturesque characterisation have not been surpassed by the entire range of poetry of satire."

Dryden's poetry is no doubt lacking in that vigour of imagination which is combined with emotional warmth and idealism in Romantic poetry of the Nineteenth century and is the source of all its literary wealth and magic appeal his poems are instead characterised by a splendid intellectual vigour of style and the characteristically classical qualities of charity, exactness, balance and order. His poetry does not at all move the heart, it has instead a very strong intellectual appeal. He may not often touch the lyrical note yet he has left many wonderful passages or great strength and eloquence.

Dryden is a consummate artist and a most wonderful metrist. He holds the principle that the variations of rhythm can have value only so far as they illustrate the sense, otherwise they are mere licences. The principle is upheld not as a mere artistic theory but is perfectly realised by him in practice. His songs for St. Cecilia's Day is a very good example of his power of illustrating the sense by introducing into his poem various variations of rhythm. These are the clever devices of a good master of prosody and with their irregular metre they manage to convey the sense admirably. Their flawless technical execution are a further source of added charm in the poem.

1. THE FALSE OF ACHITOPHEL

(1) Introduction

This is the best political satire in the English language. The general scheme is to show the rebellious character of the Puritans who insisted on the exclusion of the Duke of York from the succession, on the ground of his being a Catholic, and the determination of the King to resist this interference with his royal prerogative even at the cost of a civil war. The great difficulty was where to find a substitute. Charles II had no legal male offspring, and though he had several natural sons, the Duke of Monmouth was the only one who was the ideal of the people. So the Earl of Shaftesbury, who is called Achitophel in the poem, and out and out a Protestant, used every effort to induce Monmouth (who is called Absalom in this poem) to compel the king (who is called David in this poem) to set aside the Duke of York. Thus there were two parties. On the Puritan side was the Earl of Shaftesbury and many others. On the King's side, who advocated the divine right, were the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Bishop of London, the Bishop Rochester, the Earl of Mulgrave etc. All these men of either party have been described in this poem. Two poetasters, named Shadwell and Settle who wrote on behalf of Shaftesbury, appear as Og and Doeg in the second part of this poem. Dryden wrote this poem at the instigation of King Charles II, while the Popish plot had made the people mad. On one hand, the misgovernment of Charles, and on the other the intrigues of Shaftesbury produced a dangerous excitement in the country. Charles was a sound critic, and had ample shrewdness to find the advantage to his own cause which he might gain by enlisting Dryden. Thus *Absalom and Achitophel* was published in 1681, a week before the Grand Jury threw out the Bill against Shaftesbury on a charge of high treason. The second part of this poem came out in 1682. Except about 200 lines, it was written by Nahum Tate. The extracts given here about Doeg and Og are from the portion

contributed by Dryden. The poem enjoyed a great popularity and had a rapid sale, but the main object, namely, the over-throw of Shaftesbury was not accomplished.

The Heroic Couplet.—This is the form of versification employed by Dryden in his satires. Every line is regular. Each line contains ten syllables or five feet, the syllables being alternately accented. In fact, all the lines are regular Iambic pentameter, and the first line regularly rhymes with the second. There is a pause at the end as well as in the middle of each line. Hardly a line runs on into the other. The words selected are such that we feel no harshness or ruggedness. Before Dryden, the Heroic Couplet was harsh and rugged, and those who employed it had a very imperfect command over the couplet. In the case of Dryden, his native gifts and his great practice in writing dramas had made the couplet as natural a vehicle to him as blank verse or plain prose. The form of the heroic couplet was specially suited for satire. It had a varied cadence, a smart telling power through antithesis, and a remarkable rapidity of movement. As Saintsbury puts it, "Dryden's verse strides along with a careless Olympian motion, as if the writer were looking at his victims rather with a kind of good-humoured scorn than with any elaborate triumph."

The Biblical story of Absalom and Achitophel.—Absalom was the second son of David. He was the handsomest man in Israel. When his sister was violated by Amnon, he took vengeance upon him by slaying him at a private feast. This brought upon him his father's displeasure, wherefore he retired for three years. Later on, he was received again into favour, when fearing that his succession might be set aside on account of his wicked conduct, he proclaimed himself the king. David looked at it as a divine inflication and fled from Jerusalem. Absalom immediately proceeded to Jerusalem and was received as the king. He was now guided by his minister, Achitophel, which means in Hebrew 'brother of Folly.' Achitophel was also a most intimate friend and counsellor of David, but now he urged Absalom

to pursue his father with twelve thousand men. This pursuit was over-ruled by the council of Hushai, sent by David to counter-act the intrigues of Achitophel. Achitophel retired to Giloh and there hanged himself. Absalom however marched against David and an engagement followed, as a result of which he had to fly on a mule. While passing through the forest of Ephrain, his long hair became entangled in the branches of a tree which left him suspended from the tree, as the mule went from under him. Joab, hearing of his position, went to this forest and pierced through the heart with arrows. David was deeply grieved at the death of his son.

(2) Critical Appreciation

In this poem Dryden has spent all his intellectual powers in undoing Shaftesbury's scheme for inducing Charles II to nominate his illegitimate son as the successor to the throne against the lawful claim of the King's brother, James, who was a Roman Catholic. Dryden takes as his model the Biblical story of Absalom's revolt against David, and names the various parties to the Monmouth plot after the characters of the Biblical story. We have, in these extracts, only four characters, out of which the portrait of of Shaftesbury is the most telling example of passionately-concentrated poetic portraiture in the whole range of English literature. The character of the Duke of Buckingham appears under the name of *Zimiri*, who displays Dryden's mastery of satire. The reason why this political satire has been so successful is that instead of moral indignation, as is popular with jovenal, Dryden takes to an attitude of lofty scorn which is far more biting to the statesmen whose characters he assailed. "While he shows no weakness of mercy to the individual, he lifts his theme above the plain of personalities by the skill with which he represents the person as a type of the evil embodied in him." There lies his *forte*. In fact the peculiar character of Dryden's satire is due to these two facts, *viz*., the attitude of lofty scorn and selecting characters which are at once individuals as well as types. Most satirists commit the error of attacking

either mere types or else individuals too definitely marked as individuals. But this is not the case with Dryden. Moreover, his manner towards his characters is that of a cool and not ill-humoured scorn. A political satirist ought never to loss his temper and to rave with the air of an inspired prophet. As Saintsbury points out, the men whom Dryden denounces are certainly great scoundrels, but they are probably more contemptible than they are vicious.

Among Dryden's longer poems, this political satire is the greatest. It is a portrait gallery of Dryden's contemporaries in which the pictures are arranged with a wonderful continuity and with strict regard to the main lines of the structure. The form of the poem was suggested by the prevailing literary taste of the day. It is a string of portraits connected by a slender thread of narrative "interspersed with occasional speeches in which the arguments of his own side were in a light as favourable, and those of the other in a light as unfavouroble as possible." The three great gifts possessed by Dryden, namely, his faculty of satire, his faculty of specious argument, and the wonderful command over the Heroic Couplet are fully displayed in this poem. A critic says, "the sketch, even now about the best existing in prose or verse, of the Popish plot, the character and speeches of Achitophel, the unapproached portrait of Zimri, and the final harangue of David have, for generations, found their places in every book of elegant extract, either for general or school use." The satire lies in the tail of every couplet, in the very words of the phrases, and in the polish of the language. What strikes us most is the prodigality of irony side by side with a humorous raillery. The second part of *Absalom and Achitophel* unfortunately contains some of Dryden's greatest licenses of expression. He took to indecent language probably because he was provoked by the unparalleled gross language employed against him by Shadwell and others. There is coarseness of speech throughout the second part, but the vigour of the satire remains intact. The delineation of the characters here is crushing and the language employed is savage. In short, this poem as a whole displays Dryden's character-

istic talents in their fullest and completest vigour. He stands forth here as the champion of the court party, and deals the Exclusionists the severest blows his genius could inflict, and they were terribly affected. The descriptive power is at its highest and is more successful in the portraits of his enemies than of friends. The power of expression is wonderful, since the language displays a singular fitness for the theme.

(3) Central Idea

Those who revolted against the King had for their leader Achitophel. Achitophel was a rich man and enjoyed a high position in life, but he was not satisfied with what he had and he was fired by the ambition to become the hero of a fight against established authority. He made up his mind to fight against the King so that he may either become the greatest man in the country, or be utterly ruined. This man tried to establish the ideal of democracy among the jews.

(4) Summary

The poet calls Achitophel a traitor who in spite of being rich and well to do tried to establish in the country the democratic state. The poet says that he was a great man, had brains as well as wealth ; but his mind was fired by the ambition to become great. He had no regard for the good government of the country. In Israel a very efficient government was working and justice was meted to the rich as well as the poor. In this well established society Achitophel brought disturbance. He did not care for all the troubles that would befall him. Regardless of the risks this great mind flung himself into the struggle. He raised the standard of revolt and aim he placed before himself was the attainment of democracy. He preferred dependance on the will of people to the security which he had under the rule of the King.

(5) Notes and Explanation

Notes.—*Of these*—out of the various counsellors of King David, *i.e.*, Charles II. *Achitophel*—Earl of Shaftesbury (1621—1683). He was Chancellor of the Exchequer in 1660 and the Earl of Shaftesbury in 1672. All the wrong doing of the Cabal Ministry had been attributed to him. In foreign policy, his wish was to preserve the Triple Alliance. As a judge, he atoned his want of knowledge of law by great impartiality and acumen. With the downfall of the Cabal administration in 1673, he at once joined the opposition and commenced intrigues with Monmouth. He was sent to the Tower where he remained for a year. He was accused of being the inventor of the Popish plot, and violently attacked the Catholics and specially the Duke of York. In 1681 he attended the Parliament with a large body of armed followers, which made him go to the Tower again. The Grand Jury released him and he again began to plot for bringing about the change of government. The conspiracy was discovered and he fled to Holland where he died. *Close designs*—subtle intrigues. *Crooked counsels*—wrong and misleading advice. *Turbulent of wit*—having a fierce temperament that blinded his reason. *Restless*—ever planning some mischief. *Unfixt in principles and place*—Having no principles in life and never caring for the high position he held. In fact, his character was inconsistent with the high office he held. *In power unpleased*—mere enjoyment of power would not please him. *Impatient of disgrace*—very prone to disgrace others and thereby show his power. *A fiery soul......decay*—his body was too small and frail to stand the mental commotion that was always going on in his brain. The metaphor employed here is of a river current which frets a small piece of land jutting into it, and which it wears out in no time. *Over-informed*—charged with too much of mental energy. *Tenement of clay*—the habitation made of clay for his soul, *i e.*, his body. Refers to Job 10, 9. "Man is made of Clay." *A daring pilot in extremity*—a bold guide in emergencies. He took a desperate situation whenever dangers arose.

He seemed to be in love with danger. ***When......storms***—whenever there was a political embroilment and he saw a rough time ahead of him, he was only too pleased with the gravity of the situation. He is here likened to a daring sailor who wilfully seeks the storm in order to display his skill. Shaftesbury had the true instincts of a conspirator and revelled over the dangers that surrounded him. In fact he courted danger for enjoyment. *For a calm unfit*—unfit for administration in peaceful times. He could run the administration whenever there was revolution or a spirit of rebellion abroad. *Would steer......his wit*—He would guide the ship of the state on too strict and economic grounds, causing it to strike the sands at the bottom and split up. In other words, he would run the administration in peaceful times on such narrow ideals that it would cause restlessness among the people. He would do this merely to show his skill in statesmanship, little knowing that he was causing such a great harm to the country. *Great wits ......divide*—It is proverbial that genius is akin to madness. One who is eccentric has got his mind out of centre. In fact, the boundaries between madness and genius cannot be well defined. *Age*—old age. *Else ...rest*—otherwise why should he work even in his old age which is meant for rest, although he possesses wealth and honour ? *Punish...... please*—He could never take rest and so always taxed his physical energies in doing some or other nefarious work, like political intrigues. *Bankrupt of life*—has no vitality. *Frodigal of ease*—unwilling to give rest to his body. *And all......won*—By overwork he would die an early death and leave behind his hard-earned money to his unworthy son. *Unfeathered two-legged thing*—human in shape but without brains. Aristotle laid down the quality of two-leggedness as the distinguishing feature of man. His disciples plucked the feathers of a hen and called it Aristotle's man. *Got*—begotten. *Huddled*—crowd confusedly. *Notions*—concepts. Refers to the philosophical classification of ideas forming out various concepts. *Got......trie*—His son was begotten while his brain was full of confused thoughts. There is a pun here between 'concepts' meaning ideas, and 'conception'

meaning the birth of the child. *Anarchy*—Chaos, the confused mass of matter which existed before creation. *And born...in hate*—His son was born without any distinction of features looking like a lump of flesh. This was the result of the father's confused brain at the time of his conception. As the child grew up he became a chip of the old block, always failing in friendship, and appearing as one whose hatred could never be appeased.

From Line 25. *Resolved...the state*—This is said of the father, Achitophel. He would always like to be a great personality, and as such would either be at the head of the administration or ruin the established government. This showed his vindictive spirit. *Compass*—to contrive, to accomplish. *The triple bond*—the triple alliance which was a federation formed in 1688 between England, Sweden, and Netherlands against Louis XIV. *To compass...broke*—For self-advancement he broke the political compact between England and her Allies. This shows that he was perfectly unscrupulous where self-interest was concerned. *The pillars... shook*—Pillars are the mainstay of an arch. 'Shaking the pillars' means therefore impairing the building. Shaftesbury, by breaking the triple alliance, endangered the safety of England and created political commotion. *Israel*—here means England. As David was King of Israel, so Charles II was King of England. *Foreign Yoke*—under the power of France. *Then seized......name*—Soon after breaking the triple alliance, he found out his mistake, and was seized with fear lest he might be the cause of bringing disaster on his country. So he began to call himself a patriot without really changing his political creed and without leaving off his ambition. Really he did not deserve to be called a patriot, but assumed this name just because it washed away all sins. In other words, he nominally joined the People's party, but even then he had the idea of self-advancement. *All atoning*—that which expiates all sins. *Still it proves*—It always proves. The word 'it' stands for "to cancel private crimes with public zeal." *So easy......private crimes*—When party spirit runs high, it is very easy to wash away one's political crimes by displaying interest in public

welfare. Patriotism has been said to be the refuge of the scoundrels, because under this catchword the criminal can easily conceal his crimes. *How safe... where crowds can wink—Explanation.*—In trouble-some periods of political history, it is easy to earn the title of a hero. One has only to pander to the public taste and to show that he is carrying out the will of the people, and he is quite safe from the accusations by the Crown. Treason can never be laid at his door, and so he can do any wrong he likes, with impunity. The public connives at the fault of the man who poses to be a servant of the people. Such a man can throw dust in the people's eyes, and commit atrocities without being taken to task for them. *And no offence..... find there own*—Their offence remains unknown because they cleverly transfer their guilt to others. In order to hide their own fault, they accuse others without any twitch of conscience. *Yet ......can grudge*—Yet where he deserves fame, even his enemies have to praise him. As a judge, for instance, he displayed talents which even his enemies have to acknowledge. *The statesman .....judge*—As a statesman he was a failure and we hate him ; as judge he was a success and we praise him. *In Israel's courts .....to redress—Explanation.*—No chief judge of the Jews ever sat in the courts of Israel with a better insight and a clearer head. Stripped off the Biblical names the meaning would be that no better judge ever took his seat in any English court who possessed a clearer judgment and a stricter honesty and a more genuine desire to redress the grievances of the people whether any appeal was made to him or not Shaftesbury had been the Lord Chancellor of England and was quite a success as a judge. Dryden therefore seems to be judicious in his hits as well as in his praises. *Swift of dispatch*—quick in disposing off the cases. *Easy of access*—every one could approach him and lodge a complaint. *The Crown*—the government. *Virtues*—virtues, gifts. *Only proper to the Gown*—which are necessary for the profession of law. The author implies that Shaftesbury had missed his proper vocation in life. He was fit to be a judge but not a practical administrator. *Rankness*—over-growth of vegetation. *Cockle*—a purple flower plant among corn. *Opprest the noble seed*

—Suppressed the growth of the seed into a noble plant or corn. *His tuneful harp had strung*—would have given a music to the accompaniment of his harp. Refers to the Psalms composed by David which are given in the Bible. *Heaven had wanted*—God would have been wanting in. *O, had he been content......one immortal song—Explanation* —If he had served the government with the same talents which he displayed as a judge, or if he had been free from the many wily schemes which constantly revolved in his head, and which did not allow his real talents to develop, King Charles would have composed a special Psalm for him, so that our hymns to God would have been less by one. Just as the weeds do not allow the seed to grow up into plants, similarly his nefarious political schemes suppressed the growth of his real mind. Just as the pulling out of the weeds from the soil makes it rich, similarly the removal of political ambitions from his brain would have made him a better man. As a matter of fact, he had too many irons in the fire, and neglected his proper vocation, namely the law. If he had only stuck to his natural tendencies, he would have become a favourite of the King and an asset to the kingdom.

(5) Paraphrase

The treacherous Earl of Shaftesbury was the foremost of the Councillors of King Charles II. His name will be cursed for ages to come. He is only fit for giving wrong advice, and take to subtle intrigues. He is bold, shrewd, and has a fierce temperament that blinds his reason. He is restless in his mind and does not follow any principles, nor does he keep up his high position. He is not pleased with the mere enjoyment of power, but wants to show his power by disgracing others. He has a fiery soul in constant agitation which made his small body to decay. He charged his body of clay with too much mental energy. In extreme cases of political unrest, when revolution stalks the land, he proves to be a daring guide of the people because he loves danger. But he is quite unfit for administration in peaceful times. He would run the administration on too

rigid a scale in order to show his skill in statesmanship. Surely genius is akin to madness, and can hardly be distinguished from lunacy, otherwise why should he deny rest to his limbs in his old age even when he possesses wealth and honour? Why should he tax his physical energies, lose his vitality, and be unwilling to give rest to his body? He works hard in his old age but he shall have to leave all his property to his unworthy son who has a human shape, but has no brains, being begotten when his father's soul was confused with so many philosophical notions. Like chaos, that existed before creation, his son was a lump of flesh only without any distinct features. The Earl is false in friendships and unappeaseable in hate. He would either be at the head of the administration, or would ruin it out of vindictiveness. It was out of such a motive that he broke the compact of Triple Alliance and thereby put the safety of England in jeopardy making her liable to be conquered by France at any time. After he had done this mischief, he became conscious of it, and seized with fear began to call himself a patriot in order to expiate all his sins under the charming name of patriotism, without actually leaving off his ambitions. Whenever party spirit runs high, it is always easy to wash away one's crimes by showing zeal for public welfare. One has only to show that he is carrying out the will of the people, and he would be quite safe from treason, and all his sins would be conceived at by the people. Moreover, no body would find his own faults since he would accuse others of the very wrongs he himself had committed. Yet wherever he deserves fame, even his enemy cannot gainsay. As a statesman we hate him, but as a judge we praise him. In fact no Lord Chancellor of England has ever displayed such a keen insight, clear judgment, strict honesty, and readiness to remove the grievances of the wronged without being appealed to. No one has been so quick in the dispatch of cases and so easily accessible. We wish he would have been content to serve the government as a judge only, since he possesses the gifts only proper to the vocation of law. Even if he had kept

his mind free from the many schemes that constantly arose in his brain, his natural talents would have developed, and instead of being convicted of treason, he would have become a favourite of the King eliciting praises from him.

(6) Points to Remember

1. Achitophel was a rich prospersous man in Israel.
2. He enjoyed good fame and a high position.
3. By nature he was turbulent, though small of body his aim were high.
4. He became the leader of rebellion against the king.
5. He wanted to start a democratic government.

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2. OG AND DOEG

(1) Introduction

Og—stands for Shadwell who was a well-known poet of Dryden's Age, and who succeeded Dryden to the post of the poet-laureate. Ever since 1668 he wrote comedies and in a way he and Dryden were friends. Both of them joined Crowne in writing down the *Empress of Morocco* and it does not appear that Dryden had ever given any direct cause of offence to Shadwell. A gulf was created between the two friends, because Shadwell was very haughty and was jealous of Dryden's position as the dictator of literature and the leader of the drama. In a prologue Dryden wrote something against Shadwell as a Whig and Protestant, merely out of political consideration. Shadwell took advantage of this and declard war on Dryden by indulging in coarse and brutal verses. The result of this war was Dryden's unmatched satire *MacFlecknoe* in which Dryden pulled Shadwell to the gutters. A month after the publication of *MacFlecknoe* came out the second part of *Absolam and Achitophel* in which Shadwell is compared to Og. The special point of comparison is the great bulk of the body.

(2) Notes and Explanation.

Lines 1—34. *All and some*—every one individually. *Here's*—this way is coming. *Tun*—a large cask of wine. As Shadwell had a huge belly and was a great drunkard, he is likened to a tun. *Midnight work* - midnight revelries or carousal. *A treason tavern*—an inn where dangerou spolitics against the king are discussed. *Rowling home*—rolling, *i.e.*, going home in a staggering gait because of drink. *Round as a globe*—of considerable size. *Of*—a mountain of fat. *Liquored every chink*—smell of liquor is coming out from every pore of his, *i.e.*, ne is reeking with wine. *Goodly*—of big bulk. *Sayls*—sails. One who is very fat has to move his hands in such a way as if he is swimming. *Link*—a loop or a ring-like surveying chain. The trunk of his body is compared here with a link. *With all this......is rogue*—Don't think that his huge bulk means a vacuum within him like that of a fool because his inside is filled up with roguery also besides his foolery. In other words, he is not only a fool but a knave. *Corrupted*—decomposed. *Spewed*—vomitted. *Batter*—a wall narrow at the top of a fotress. Here it refers to his body. *A Monstrous......batter*—His body is composed of a big mass of foul rotten matter, so that it appears that all the devils had vomitted their corrupt matter in order to make up his bulky body. *Blaspheme*—utter profain words. *Curt him*—by giving him a unweildy body and weak intellect. *Paunch*—Belly, tummy. *So rich*—so fat. *And if man......so poor—Explanation*—They say man is distinguished from other animals by his having reason. The society of men which made Shadwell so rich in his living must be possessing the faculty of reason in a high degree. It is but proper that an idiot like him should have a huge body containing nothing in side. Such a man richly deserves a life of poverty. *Of old*—in the olden days of Jewish persecution. *Tamper up*—over-indulge. *A Jew*—stands for a Puritan of Dryden's days. *With wealth .. a Jew*—he was a Jew, *i.e.*, a Puritan and therefore God knowingly did not give him wealth. God knew that the consequences of over-indulging a Puritan would bring on a national disaster as in the olden days. *Tripe*—entrails of

an ox. *Carrion*—dead flesh. *To what......could rebel?*—He resists authority by waxing fat like a pampered animal even when he is fed on entrails and dead flesh. So naturally he would swell with pride if he is fed on delicious meat of quails and pheasants. The swelling of the body when fed on good food is compared to the swelling of his head, *i.e.*, his pride. *With reverence speaking*—to speak without blaspheming God. *A poet of God's making—i.e.*, he never had the divine inspiration of the poet. *Thick skull*—emblematic of idiocy. *The mid-wife......be thou dull*—the blessing that the mid-wife gave to Shadwell when he was born was 'be thou dull'. This was because of his having a thick skull which denotes an idiot. *Drink swear......but write*—you may drink and swear and swagger as much as you like and indulge in the delights of a coarse mind, because a low mind is quite appropriate for your huge body, and a poet's profession is incompatible with swearing and swaggering as well as weak intellect. *Nativity*—birth. *The pen*—the literary profession. *Thou art......for the pen*—Your natural built of the body was meant by nature to give you a strong and enduring physique as is the case with all idiots. By birth you have a huge body which is quite unfit for brain work. Nature therefore never meant you for the profession of the poet. *Eat opium......pen and ink*—your body is so strong and you possess such a fine general vitality that even if you eat opium or drink arsenic you will not die, provided you avoid writing poetry. The mental work of a poet's profession would kill you more easily than all the poisons of the world could. *'Tis......vain*—my advice is useless. *For treason......die bane*—if you write poetry, you are sure to patch up your verses with treason, because of your poor intellect, and that would prove to be your ruin. Dryden, of course, paints the picture of Shadwell too black and descends very low. In spite of his hitting Shadwell below the belt, the man lived to be the successor of Dryden as the poet-laureate. *Rhime is......to thy neck*—if you insist on writing poetry you will be completely ruined. It will cause your death in the literary world and also in the literal sense. Your body is

not meant for literary work, and if you force the body to take the mental work, it will ruin your good name and bring about your physical death ultimately. *Blast*—blow up, ruin. *A Psalm of his*—refer to the famous psalms of David recorded in the Bible. *Will surely be thy......last*—as he would not allow you write any more poem in such a bad style. *Why should .....be thy last—Explanation.*—A poem written by Shadwell either in praise of or in denunciation of the King is sure to bring ruin on the author. If it is against the King he will be convicted of treason. If it is in praise of the King, he will not be allowed to write again because the King would be convinced of his bad verses. Therefore Dryden suggests that Shadwell should never take to verses. *To meet thy foes*—to be equal to your enemies in versification.

From Line 35. *Foiled*—baffled. *Thou whom......in prose?*—You could not be successful in running the Penny pamphlets in prose, what to say of writing poems worthy of King Charles. *Whom God.........made*—Whom God has created for the amusement of mankind, *i.e.*, he is a laughing stock. *O'er-tops thy talent*—excels you in merit. *In thy very trade*—in your profession of a poet. *Course*—coarse. *The Poet's horse*—a beast of burden for carrying poems of great bulk on his back, *i.e.*, a mere hackwriter. *Doeg to thee. . . . . poet's horse—Explanation.*—The character sketches of Shadwell in his satirical poem are so vulgar that he looks upon his contemporary Settle the ideal poet although he is merely a hackwriter. It is a volume of Settle's writings that appeals to Shadwell. In other words, Shadwell's conception of a good poetry is that he should be able to write voluminous poems. There is also a suggestion here that even Settle outshines Shadwell by contrast. *A double......dull*—you run a double danger in writing verses, *firstly* of earning notoriety by the dullness of the verses, and *secondly* incurring the displeasure of the King by indiscreet writing. *To die......the devil*—Men suffer always on account of party politics but to be denounced for nonsensical writings signifies a miserable lot. The sting

lies here in making the word 'devil' a stronger form of the word 'evil'. Writing containing treason is an *evil* but dull writing for which one can be hanged is not an evil but the *devil*. *Hadst thou......at the best*—your praise in verse even of the King would be interpreted as a satire since you do not know how to use appropriate words. You would unwittingly make use of words which would be satirical and thus you will incur the King's displeasure. *Unlicked*— unpolished—*Unpointed*—unsharpened, containing no hit. *Defied the Lord's anointed*—Set at naught the authority of the King who is a king by divine right. *Rake the dunghill*—recount your crimes of the past. *The doom*—the highest condemnation. *And for my foes...like thee*—the bitterest sting of the whole piece lies at the tail. The only blessing (*i.e.*, *curse*) that the poet can think of for his enemies is that they may be able to talk nonsense like Settle and write nonsense like Shadwell. The worst talker is Settle and the dullest writer is Shadwell. Note that the Satire of this poem develops as we go on till the bitterest stage is reached in the last lines.

(3) Paraphrase

Readers, stop your noses, every one of you because this way comes a great drunkard looking like a large cask of wine after his mid-night revelries. This man is Shadwell (Og) who is rolling home from a tavern where politics against the King are discussed. He is round like a globe and smells of liquor all over his body just as in the case of a wine of cask. He is of such a bulky size that he seems to swim behind his trunk, which looks like a link. This bulk, however, does not signify a vacuum in as much as that part of him which is not filled up with dullness is full of mischief. His body is made up of a huge mass of foul decomposed matter which all the devils had vomitted. When the wine affects his head, he has the courage to speak impiously of God, but God has already punished him by giving him a big body and a small head. Man is a rational animal and no society is more rational than the one which made him become fat without having any money. He is

penniless because God did not trust him with money. God knew the consequences of over-indulging a Jew (Puritan), as is revealed by ancient history. The man begins to defy the authority even now when he is fed on the entrails of animals and the flesh of dead animals. We can well imagine how he would swell (in pride) if he were to be fed on quail and pheasant. To speak without being profain, although God had made him poor yet he was never meant by God to be a poet (who is proverbially poor). When he was born the blessing that the mid-wife gave to him, when she saw his thick skull, was that he should be dull all his life. You can indulge in drinking, blaspheming and swaggering, because a coarse mind fits in with your bulky body. But you should never take to writing. Like other idiots, your natural constitution is meant to be strong and enduring, but never for the poet's profession. Your body with its general vitality would be able to stand against opium and arsenic and so you can have a long life provided you avoid writing poetry. But I know my advice is useless. You will always introduce treasonable matter in your verses, and that will bring on your ruin. Your ship (your body) will be wrecked on the rock of rhyme. You should bring dishonour and death on yourself if you attempt to write poetry. I tell you why you will be ruined, if you write in praise of the King. Your panegyric for him would be so bad that he would not allow you to write any more. How can you think of writing satirical poetry like your enemies when you could not run even the penny pamphlet in prose successfully ? Even Settle whom God created for the amusement of man excels you in your profession of poet. Your character sketches are so vulgar that even Settle appears to you to be an ideal poet although he is merely a hackwriter. If you attempt poetry you will run a double danger—you would be convicted of treason and at the same time denounced for dull writing. Men do suffer and give up their lives as a result of party politics. But to be hanged for dull writing is indeed the height of misfortune. If you had sung the praises of the King, your verses at best would have been interpreted to be satirical because your clumsy verses, unpolished and having

no point of Satire, would mean shamful defence of King's authority, who is king by divine right. Well, I would not relate all your crimes of the past, because anyone who reads your poetry can find out of your character. All that I can say is that the highest-condemnation of these enemies of the King should be "May all of them meet the fate of the young Duke of Monmouth". Likewise, may the blessing for my enemies be "that they may be able to talk nonsense like Settle and to write dull like Shadwell".

Recapitulatory Question

Q. 1. What was the occasion of Dryden's poem "Achitophel" ?

Ans. Reproduce the "Introduction".

Q. 2. Write a short note on the Heroic couplet which Dryden has used in his poems.

Ans. Reproduce the remarks given under the heading "The Heroic Couplet".

Q. 3. What literary beauty do you find in Dryden's poem "The False of Achitopal"? What place does this poem occupy among the satirical poems of England ?

Ans. Reproduce the "Critical Appreciation".

Q. 4. Paint after Dryden the picture of (a) Earl of Shaftesbury, (b) Duke of Backingham (c) Settle, and (d) Shadwell.

Ans. Reproduce the paraphrases in full, which are nothing but character sketches.

3. ALEXANDER'S FEAST

(1) The Poem

Here the poet shows how music can hypnotise a human being to do any act right from fury of madness down to tenderness of love. The poet depicts here the scene of Alexander's feast on his victory in Persia wherein Timotheus, the great Greek musician charms Alexander and his companions to laugh, weep and even to get wild in fury with the force of his music. The poem is one of the well-known examples of rhetoric where shifts in rhythm and sound have been so skilfully manipulated by Dryden. The concluding stanza depicts the typical religious touch of the poet where he sings in praise of St. Cecilia :

He raised a mortal to the skies
She drew an angel down.

(2) Summary

Decked with the laurels of victory in Persia, Alexander was enjoying a feast with his brave companions. His beautiful beloved Thais, sat by his side. Timotheus, the great Greek musician played the lyre singing first in praise of Jove, and created an atmosphere where it looked as if the god had incarnated in the form of Alexander. He next sung of Bacchus, the god of wine and merry-making, and as a result, Alexander was so elated in spirit that he threw a challenge both to heaven and earth. But suddenly the singer began a sad song about tragic end of Darius which overpowered Alexander's emotions and he burst out in tears. The musician began a sweet love song and Alexander was so much enraptured with it that he lost all control over himself and buried his head in the lap of his beloved. Then he struck his instrument producing a tune like the rumbling sound of thunder, and created an atmosphere in which Alexander woke up from his sleep and arose in

extreme fury to crush the ghosts of the Grecian soldiers slain long back, but who were now seen as if following him. This hypnotic trance broke down as soon as the great master stopped his song. All this proved the power of music upon human beings, but it was even greater than that when St. Cecilia drew an angel from heaven down to the earth where she was playing her organ.

(3) Paraphrase

Stanza 1. It was the occasion of the royal feast on the victory of Persia by the valiant fighter Alexander the Great. He sat on his lofty throne in wonderful majesty like a hero worshipped as god, and his brave noblemen sat around him with crowns of roses and myrtles decorating their heads as those of his victorious soldiers encamped in the desert. His beautiful beloved Thais sat besides him like a glamouring Oriental bride in full prime of youth and beauty. Thus amidst the happy pair—Alexander and Thais—flushed with their great victory, the brave nobles enjoyed the great feast.

Stanza 2. The great musician Timotheus sat on a prominent place among the band of musicians playing the lyre with his quick-moving fingers. The vibrating notes thus produced rose high to heavens after inspiring an exquisite, rather unearthly, joy among the audience present at the feast. He began a song in praise of the supreme Olympian God Zeus, who under the mighty influence of love left for a mortal woman his heavenly seat, assumed the form of a violent dragon, and taking the shining serpentine course (supposed to connect the heaven with earth) came down to the beautiful city of Olympia where getting hold of the snow-white body of his beloved curled himself round it and then imprinted his real form of the supreme god on her. The audience appreciated the song and shouted : "Here is the god present amongst us", pointing towards Alexander, because like Jove, Alexander was highly estimated as the 'sovereign of the world' by his people. The arched roof of the hall, where the feast was being held, resounded with the shouts of Alexander's praise and in an

ecstatic mood he takes himself to be actually the god Jove personified. He nods to the cheers of the men and it looks as if in his might and majesty the heaven and earth are both trembling.

Stanza 3. Then the fine musician began a song in praise of Bacchus, the very young and handsome god of wine and merry-making. Such was the effect of the music that with the sound of the trumpets and beat of the drums the jolly god was charmed, and he was coming down with his ruddy face flushed with joy and with a sincere wish to them. As the music was on, the soft tunes of oboes seemed to speak: "Look, there comes Bacchus," and all instruments combined together created an atmosphere as if actually he was amongst them. The ever young and handsome god of wine first started the drinking carouses. Therefore, his blessings are sought in every gathering of the kind. But the soldiers must specially be highly blessed by Bacchus because drinking is the greatest form of enjoyment and pleasure to them after hardships and difficulties of the battle-field.

Stanza 4. Depicting the power of music, the poet now speaks of the song which suddenly changed the entire atmosphere of the party from gay to grey. Under the influence of the song about Bacchus, Alexander was highly elated and his imagination fired back to the field of battle, and again and again he visualised the scenes of his killing of his enemies. His continuous and repeated thinking raised his frenzy to the point of madness; his face flushed and his eyes reddened, and he threw a challenge to both heaven and the earth. Thus bringing him to the height of pride, the singer checked him by changing the song and the tune on the instrument. This time he selected a tragic song to tone him down and cause regret and repentence instead. He sang about the great and good Emperor Darius whose extreme ill-luck had cast him down from his exalted position. He lost battle after battle till he met a violent death having been deserted at the time of his greatest need by his courtiers and noblemen whom he had been trusting for their

fidelity, and who had been growing fat on his largess and gifts. The end of Darius was narrated in the song as the once Lord of Persia lying naked in a pool of blood with no one even to close his eyes after death. That was the sad end of the great and noble Emperor. It touched Alexander. He cast his face down and in intense misery thought seriously (in his totally changed state of mind from that of the previous song) how chance had led Darius down from stage to stage. The tragedy of the great Emperor thus enacted before him through the medium of music made him morose and gloomy. Its thought made him heave a sigh secretly now and then, but at last the emotion completely overpowered him. He could no longer control his thoughts and, therefore, he burst out in tears. That was another height achieved by the great singer.

Stanza 5. The tragic song, having made Alexander weep in pity, the great musician smiled to start next a love-song which usually comprises of identical tunes with a tragic song because love and pity are interlaced with each other. It was a sweet song which he sang with soft Lydian music and thus soothed his mind from depression on to pleasure. He sung that warfare leads to no end beyond constant sweat and labour towards death and destruction, and that honour won through such deeds of destruction is just transient like the life of a water-bubble. Therefore, if you think it worthwhile to conquer the world at the cost of all such troubles, you must enjoy its fruits as well. Here is, therefore, your beautiful beloved Thais whom you should accept as a gift from the gods. The audience around Alexander shouted aloud in praise of her, and through the effect of music Alexander was overpowered with her love to such an extent that he cast a constant look at her who was the cause of all his love pangs, and while thus looking on her sighed again and again. At last this great victor was completely overpowered with the force of love and drinks, and he drooped his head into the lap of his sweetheart. That was the climax attained again by music.

Stanza 6. (While Alexander in an ecstatic mood raised

to the highest pitch by the force of music and drink goes to sleep with his head buried in the lap of his beloved), Timotheus asks his men to strike golden lyre louder and louder, and awake the mighty Alexander from his sound slumber with its thunder-like rumbling noise. (The musicians do so, and lo, the horrifying noise thus produced awakes Alexander, and he gazes round him in utter confusion. Timotheus then adds to the horrid atmosphere by crying aloud : "Look ! The goddesses of vengeance are coming with snakes hissing in hair and sparks flashing in eyes to pursue the dreadful band of ghosts,—each dancing with a lighted torch in hand,—of those Greek soldiers who were long back slain in the battle against you, but whose bodies remained unburied on the field in abject dishonour.' He further urges Alexander to get up and strike those daring spirits in vengeance which they amply deserved. He cries forth : "Look ! How the ghosts are waving their torches high in the air and are pointing towards your camp and your temples here which are the abodes of the gods who were always against them." At this princes around Alexander cry forth with violent excitement, while Alexander himself gets up in extreme frenzy of revenge picking up readily a flaming torch in his hand. Thais, his beloved, in the meantime leads him with a light towards those ghosts so that like Helen of Troy, she may help him to finish those devils for good.

Stanza 7. Thus, long before the invention of the wind-bags with humming pipes, or the organs, Timotheus could hypnotise the human beings to the extent of the fury of revenge or down to the tenderness of love (as shown in the case of Alexander in the foregoing verses) with the music of his flute or the sound of his lyre. This was established till at last there came the holy St. Cecilia, who invented the organ and with her sacred enthusiasm enhanced the hither to limited scope of musical effect upon living persons with her natural gifts of commonsense and knowledge of arts yet unknown to others. Thus, St. Cecilia stands higher to Timotheus, who may, therefore, either completely surrender his crown of the head of musicians to her or at

least share it equally with her, because if with the force of his music Timotheus could elevate a human being to the sublimity of heavens, Cecilia could perform an equally marvellous (if not superior) feat by attracting an angel from heaven down to the earth.

(4) Notes and Explanations

Stanza I,—*Philip's war-like son*—Alexander the Great (356-323 B.C.), son of Philip II of Macedon and of Olympias. In 330 B.C., he met Darius Emperor of Persia and defeated him at the battle of Arbela ; but Darius fled eastward when Bessus, Darius's own cousin murdered him for the sake of throne. *Awful state*—wonderful majesty. *God-like hero*—hero worshipped as a god. *Peers*—nobles. *Their brows ...... bound*—it was customary amongst the Greeks to adorn the victorious soldiers with crowns of green ivy, roses or myrtle leaves. *Desert in arms be crowned*—Alexander's victorious soldiers encamped in the desert of Persia be crowned with roses and myrtles. *Thais*—Alexander's sweetheart prominent in romance. Her story as usually told is that she went to Asia with Alexander, that she persuaded him to burn Persepolis, and after his death she went to Egypt and lived with the reigning Ptolemy. *Fair*—feast. *None but the brave...fair*—by repeating the words ' none but the brave' the poet wants to create a rhythmic and forceful impression about the gathering of the brave. The repetition here immensely adds to the music of the piece.

Stanza 2. *Timotheus* (446—357 B.C.)—Greek poet and musician of Miletus ; his innovations in music, like our Tansen in this country, made him very celebrated. The poet here makes a chronological blunder because Timotheus had died a year before Alexander was born. So the former's presence at the victory feast with Alexander in Persia is absurd. However, we are not dealing with history here, so it can pass as a piece of poetic imagination. *Trembling notes*—vibrating notes of music. *Jove*—the Roman god Jupiter, corresponding to Zeus. In Greek

mythology he was the supreme Olympian god, giver of judgment in peace and victory in war, ruler of the lives of gods and of men. In his love for a mortal woman he descended upon the summit of mount Olympus in the form of dragon where after curling himself round the woman he assumed his real godly form again. *Olympia*—Place in Greece which was an important centre of worship of Zeus and as the scene of the Olympic games. The great temple of Zeus at this place was especially celebrated for the ivory-and-gold adorned statue, the Olympian Zeus of Phidias—one of the seven Wonders of the world. *And stamped......himself*—Zeus came down to Olympia in the form of a dragon ; he curled himself round the body of his beloved and then assumed his real shape of the supreme Olympian god. *Ravished ears*—ecstacy due to the effect of music upon one's mind.

Stanza 3. *Bacchus*—god of wine ; orgiastic revels honoured him as the bringer of wine, but he was also a patron of friendly meetings, of choral song and of the drama. He journeyed through many lands, trying to lead men into a new life of freedom and joy. *Flashed......grace*—his ruddy form flushed with joy. *Hautboy*—wood-wind musical instrument commonly known as 'oboe'. *Sweet is......pain*—it is natural that pleasure (especially to a soldier) after the sweat and toil of hard work is extremely enjoyable.

Stanza 4. *Vain*—self-confidence ; elation, self-ostentation. *Soothed with vain*—Under the influence of the music, Alexander was highly elated. *Fought all......slew the slain*—His thoughts ran back to the fields of battle where he had met his enemies, and again and again he visualised the manner in which he had killed them there. *The master saw the madness rise*—His continuous and repeated thoughts raised his frenzy to the point of madness. *Ardent*—fiery, glowing. *He chose......pity to infuse*—he selected a tragic song to tone him down and cause regret and repentence in him. *Darius*—(see note about '*Philip's warlike son*' given under Stanza 1). *By too severe a fate ......high estate*—Extraordinary ill-luck cast him down and

down from his exalted position. Note : The repetition of the word 'fallen' has created a marvellous picture of the great Emperor descending gradually down to sheer nonentity. *Welter*—to roll or toss about. *Weltering one's blood*—to die a violent death. *Deserted bounty......fed*—deserted at the moment of his greatest need by his courtiers and noblemen who previously fed fat on his largess and gifts. *With not a friend......eyes*—with no one to attend him at the moment of his death and close his eyes when he died.

Stanza 5. *Lydian measures*—Lydian tunes. Lydia was an ancient empire, of West Asia Minor extending east-ward from the Aegean, and including the valleys of the Hermus and Cayster, separated by Mount Timolus. Its inhabitants were highly civilized, and to them is ascribed the first use of gold and silver coins, as well as the invention of certain musical instruments. *Love was crowned*—love attained the height of esteeem. *Pain*— pangs of love. *Vanquished Victor*—the great conqueror Alexander was thus defeated by love through the influence of music.

Stanza 6. *Louder strain*—louder tunes. *Break...... sleep asunder*—awake him from sound sleep. *Rattling...... thunder*—rumbling noise of thunder. *Hark*—listen. *Revenge ......cries*—to add to the atmosphere already created by the thundering music, Timotheus cries aloud : "Revenge, revenge". *See the Furies......from their eyes*—in Greek mythology, the Furies were goddesses of vengeance. They were usually represented as three maidens, winged, with snakes in their hair. They pursued criminals, drove them mad, and tormented them in Hades. *Furious Joy*— violent excitement for revenge. *Anoher*—another. *Helen, fir'd another Troy*—In Greek mythology, Helen was the most beautiful of all women. She married Menelaus, and bore him a daughter. The trouble began when Helen fell in love with 'Paris', son of the king of Troy, and eloped with him. The Greeks, led by the brother of Menelaus, besieged Troy for ten years and won at last by deceit. They pretended to abandon their camp, but left a large wooden horse in which several warriors were hidden. The Trogans

carried the horse into the city as an offering to Athena. The warriors secretly left the horse at night, opened the city gates, and admitted the Greek army. Troy was sacked and put to fire. Thus as Helen was instrumental in burning down Troy, Thais wishes here to be prominent in destroying the devils by setting fire to them.

Stanza 7. *Heaving bellows*—wind bags with humming pipes. *While......mute*—before the invention of the organ. *Breathing flute*—music of flute. *Could swell......soft desire*—he could hypnotise the person to the fury of anger or to tenderness of love. *Divine Cecilia*—St. Cecilia : (for further explanation see the previous poem). *Inventress of the vocal frame*—inventor of the famous musical instrument called 'organ'. *Mother-wit*—common-sense. *He raised a mortal ......angel down*—In these lines the poet compares the musical attainments of the Greek musician Timotheus with those of St. Cecilia. He says that while the former elevated a human being to sublime heights with the power of his music, the latter attracted the angels down to the earth who considered her music to be a divine call.

(5) Critical Appreciation

Alexander Feast is classed as an ode. It was the second of two odes written by Dryden for the festival of St. Cecilia—the first being A Song for St. Cecilia Day written in 1687. Alexander's Feast was written in the year 1697. The theme of this Ode is the glorification of St. Cecilia, the patron saint of music and the inventor of the Organ. Like *A Song for St. Cecilia's day* it is "mainly in iambic measure and irregular in metre and stanza". Dryden regarded this Ode as his best poetic composition and Pope praised it highly in his *Essay on Criticism.* Prof. Cazamian consider this poem as "more spontaneous of note, but still somewhat too clever masterpiece in imitative harmony. The flexibility, the variety, the wealth of rhythmic resources, and of the suggestive or descriptive methods employed, show the incomparable gifts of Dryden as a versifier."

This poem which was written in a single night according to Lord Bolingbroke, has been rated as"the noblest lyric in the English language" by many critics. However a few critics have not regarded it favourably. J. C. Collins considered it "merely a rhetorically-imposing masterpiece" and Van Doren dismissed it as "only immortal ragtime."

According to modern critics the Ode is "too obviously rhetorical lacking in subtlety and in delicacies of tone." the average reader, however, admires the force and fire of this poem while feeling at the same time that its appeal to emotions is conventional. There is more of brass band's resonance than absolutely genuine emotion in this poem.

The Ode "illustrates Dryden's skill in making his lines march to the measure of his thought. It is true that in his lyrics Dryden's charm is rather one of line and general movement than of phrase or word. He has little of the magic and glamour that belong to poets of deeper, though perhaps less ample, inspiration. His best quality is artistic and literary not imaginative."

The chief characteristics of this Ode are its rhetorical quality and its ability to make the sound echo the sense. Almost every stanza is an illustration of the rhetorical power that Dryden possessed in an eminent degree. For instance :

Behold how they toss their torches on high,
How they point to the Persian abodes,
And glittering temples of their hostile gods.
The Prices applaud with furious joy ;
And the king seized a flambeau with zeal to destroy,
  Thais led the way,
  To light him to his prey,
And, like another Helen, fired another Troy !

Recapitulatory Question

Q. 1. Describe the different themes of Timotheus' Music and the different kinds of emotional responses which they evoked from the mind of Alexander.

Ans. Dryden starts by describing the royal feast held by Alexander at Persipolis (in Persia) in honour of his victory against the Persians. Thais a lovely Athenian courtezan sat by his side, as he listened to the music of Timotheus, the Theban musician. The brief description of the feast is contained in the first stanza and the next five relate the themes of the song of Timotheus and the effect of each theme on the heart of Alexander.

Timotheus begins with an account of Alexander's descent from Jove. He sings how Jove fell in love with Olympias, Alexander's mother and how he appeared in the guise of a snake and made love to her. The next theme of his song is the praise of Bacchus, the god of wine. Alexander is excited and he pictures to himself the actual scenes of battle and grows more and more furious. In order to curb his pride and fury Timotheus changes the theme and sings in a doleful manner of the downfall and death of Darius, the Persian opponent of Alexander. The king is moved to pity and begins to shed tears. Timotheus next dwells on the sweet theme of love and reminds Alexander that war is nothing but hardship and trouble and that fierce joy of war is nothing as compared with the enjoyment of love and beauty. Overpowered by wine and passion, Alexander sinks on the breast of Thais, the lovely courtezan. Timotheus now awakens Alexander from this mood by playing harsh music on his lyre. He now dwells on the theme of revenge and incites Alexander to take revenge for the deaths of those Greek soldiers who had been slain by the Persians in his war with them. Alexander feels so incited that he seizes a burning torch and sets fire to the palaces and temples of the Persians.

The last stanza compares the achievements of Timotheus and St. Cecilia as master-musicians. Timotheus with the music of his lyre roused the feeling of rage or pity in the

heart of Alexander. It is therefore befitting that Timotheus the great musician should yield the palm to Alexander Feast. No doubt Timotheus performed the miracle of inspiring the soul of Alexander to lofty heights with the music of his lyre.

Dryden at the end slightly alters the story of St. Cecilia to suit the exegencies of his theme i.e., the glorification of St. Cecilia, (the legendary patroness of church music and the inventoress of organ pipe) and the exaltation of the pipe-organ music as the 'Divine music', so he ascribes the descent of the angel to the earth not to the attraction of the 'spotless purity' of the saint but to the power of her music.

4. LOVE

(1) Substance

This piece of poem has been derived from a drama "Conquest of Granada". In this poem he expresses his opinion about love; he holds that love is a sweet folly. All lovers are mad and love is not more than madness. In love, jealousy, hatred, sorrows are unavoidable. These can never be excluded from love.

(2) Notes and Explanation

Notes :—*Rave* : madness. *Strife* : struggle for victory. *Delude* : Deceive. *Void* : empty. *Enchantment* : false notion or pleasable.

Explanation. According to the poet love is equal to madness. All lovers indulge in this madness. Though this is fact that love is nothing more than that of folly but it is very charming folly. It is so pleasing that everyone wish to be trapped. In love, reason cannot be applied. It is like that of heaven particularly for the lovers who never let wisdom to penetrate their love affairs. A lover can never keep himself aside from the jealousy and hatred against others and having the idea to get his love. In love a large period of life is lost very silently. Oh, set me free I don't desire of having such charms and happiness. I should

prefer to go into misery rather than to be called myself a fool. Where is the soothing power of love for which you have been boasting. I want to collect all those pains that have been lost by sweet folly.

5. A PRAYER

(1) Substance

Prayer is an extract of a famous poem of Dryden, "The Hind and the Panther". In this prayer the poet seeks God's guidance to set him on proper path. He accepts that he has lost his youth and manhood in aimless desires. Now he desires to spend his life in searching out the immortal light, that may guide him to find out the right path.

(2) Notes and Explanation

Notes : *Ascend* —to climb. *Hemisphere* —half of the globe. *Forbid* —restrain. *Blaze* —flame. *Forsake* —give up.

Explanation. This poem is a prayer. The poet laments that in modern days all those valuable things which were the source of happiness have been thrown aside. In present days we have no proper guidance. He desires to God to provide him unerring guidance by His precious kindness. You are a source of immortal light but hidding in darkness. My feeble eyes are unable to face your flame's of light. Oh, God teach me to believe you, though You are invisible. Give me the power to spend the rest of my life in Your research.

But I must follow the path of my saviour for whom You had promised not to forsake him. The poet admits, that his youth was spent in useless desires and his manhood was also spent in wild and vain emotions, when precious age was lost, then he realized that he was the same knowledgeless as he had been in his early life. You have the same glory and I have the same shame.

6. REASON AND RELIGION

(1) Substance

Poet compares the religion and reason. According to him the reason is like that of dimlight of moon or stars.

As compared to that the religion is like the sun. When sun climbs up the feeble light are disappeared.

(2) Notes and Explanation

Notes. *Beams* —rays. *Weary* —tired. *Glimmering* —twinkling, feeble light. *Taper* —thin wax candles or a small light. *Ascent* —to climb up. *Hemisphere* —half of the globe.

Explanation. In this poem the poet compares reason and religion. According to the poet the reason is like the dim beams of moon and stars which borrowed by earth, to give light to its lonely, weary, wandering travellers. So reason is not the soul of light and she is incapable to solve the secret of sky. So actually we have no light at all. The feeble rays of wisdom or reason cannot penetrate into the depth of knowledge.

Neither she can understand the complicated ways of life. Yes it is a source to uplift us to the better understanding. She is not the distination but the lamp of way. As compared to it the religion is like a sun. When it mounts up all the feeble rays are faded away.

How pale reason seems before the glorious light of religion (The Sun). She cannot stand herself before the supernatural light of religion.

(3) Recapitulatory Questions

Q. 1. What is the opinion of Dryden about religion ?

Ans. See the substance of "Reason and Religion" and "Prayer" adding with *didactic poems* under "Key Question".

KEY QUESTIONS

Q. 1. Dryden was '*the greatest man of a little age*'. Comment. (Important).

Ans. There is one opinion about Dryden's place in Restoration literature, but two opinions regarding his place in English literature. In any book of verse anthology, Dryden is thinly represented; hardly two or three pages would be given to him. Dryden's place in English poetry is peculiar. "Average student's knowledge of Dryden is shadowy. There are few English writers of eminence, whom it is so difficult to realize satisfactorily to the mind's eye as Dryden." Richard Garnett remarks, "It is most difficult to determine if he (Dryden) be placed at the bottom of the first class or at the head of the second class of English poets. If creative imagination, unconscious inspiration, unstudied music, lofty ideal, are essentials of the first rank, then Dryden belongs to the second." He is one of these poets, who cannot straightaway enter the temple of poetry, but who have to wait outside for entrance, which, many a time, is refused. Hence Dryden has rightly been called the most prosaic of the greatest English poets. He is the greatest poet that age of Restoration produced.

Dryden may be said to have brought poetry down to earth ; but it was necessary for poetry to be brought down to earth at that time, just as it was necessary at the beginning of twentieth century, when romantic manner had become outworn. "If Dryden has failed to captivate some readers of poetry, it is because he deals almost exclusively with public affairs" (Raleigh). And another critic says that if war, politics, arguments were banished from the face of the earth, nothing would be left for him (Dryden), to say Dryden was the father of modern prose, rather than of verse. "There are the gifts of imagination" remarks Walker, "with which he was ill-endowed. The highest levels of poetry are beyond him, but highest levels of poetry are not necessary for satire ; for that Dryden had every endowment that man could possess." Dryden was a great satirist, not a great poet.

Satires:— *Absalom and Achitophel*: Among his longer poems, the greatest is "Absalom and Achitophel". The occasion of Dryden's first and greatest satire is historical. It was written in 1681, at a time when political passion and popular excitement were at their height in England owing to the struggle over the Exclusion Bill. This measure, promoted by Shaftesbury and the Whigs, aimed at the exclusion of James, Duke of York, from the succession to the throne since he was an avowed Roman Catholic. Charles II, by skilful manoeuvring, had succeeded in putting Shaftesbury and the Whigs in the wrong, and having dissolved Parliament in 1681, felt strong enough to prosecute those who had taken an active part in the agitation against James. Afterwards Shaftesbury was sent to the Tower on a charge of treason. This step led to an outburst of pamphlets, lampoons and other attacks on the king and his ministers. With a view to answering these attacks and influencing the public mind against Shaftesbury before his trial, Dryden as poet laureate was pressed into the service of the royal party. The result was the publication of "Absalom and Achitophel", a few days before Shaftesbury was indicted, and which remains to this day *the finest example of political satire in English literature*. The allegory was easily understood, and there was little difficulty in piercing the thin disguise of the allegorical names given to the chief personages. Absalom, of course, was the ill-fated Monmouth; Achitophel, Shaftesbury ; King Charles figures as David; Duke of Buckingham is described under the name of Zimiri.

"The Management of Absalom was a difficult matter. With all his transgressions, the rebel Monmouth was still loved by his father, and Dryden could not have ventured to treat him as his prototype is treated by scripture...... The catastrophe required by poetical justice does not come to pass, and the conclusion is time. All such defects, however, are forgotten in the splendour of the execution. The versification is the finest in its style that English literature had yet seen, the perfection of heroic verse. The sense is weighty and massive, as befits such an organ of expression, and whatever may be thought of Dryden's flatteries of

individuals, there is no reason to doubt the sincerity with which he here expesses his political conviction" (Richard Garnett). Dryden's poem is considered to be a brilliant exercise of fancy and dialectic. As such, it will never cease to please and to impress. 'The finest passages are, no doubt, those descriptive of character, whether carefully studied portraits or strokes against particular foibles imputed to the poet's adversaries. The elaborate and glowing characters of Achitophel (Shaftesbury) and Zimiri (Buckingham) it is needless to transcribe, as they are universally known'. Dryden made his poem little more than a string of portraits, connected together by the very slenderest thread of narrative, and interspersed with occasional speeches in which the arguments of his own side were put in a light as favourable, and those of the other in a light as unfavourable as possible, "*Most satirists are unusually prone to the error of attacking either mere types or else individuals, too definitely marked as individuals.*" *Dryden avoids both these faults.* "*His figures are always at once types and individuals*. Zimiri is at once Buckingham and the idle grand seigneur who plays at politics and learning. Achitophel at once Shaftesbury and the abstract intriguer, Shimei at once Bethel and the sectarian politician of all days" (Saintsbury). He was very careless of anything like a regular plot for his poems. The subjects with which he dealt were of too vital an interest to his readers to allow them to stay and ask the question whether the poems had a beginning, a middle, and an end. Sharp personal satire and biting political denunciation needed no such setting. He did, however, give other things of much greater importance. There are passages of Dryden's satires in which every couplet has not only the force but the actual sound of a slap in the face. " It never does for the political satirist to lose his temper and to rave and rant and denounce with the air of an inspired prophet. Dryden......has observed this rule......His manner towards his subjects is that of a cool and ill-humoured scorn."

The study of " Absalom and Achitophel " reveals Dyrden as a pleader in verse ; he is an advocate who is

pleading on behalf of the crown. The necessary requisites for a pleader are oratory, arguments and pursuasion, which find no place in a great poet, who sways our passions by imaginative revelation. A writer of prose has to argue ; but that is not the task of a poet, whose foremost job is to sing. There is brilliancy in the verse of "Absalom and Achitophel", but mere brilliancy never quickens our pulses. There are in this satire passages, which show Dryden's great power of description; but merely descriptive poets are never great. The subject of "Absalom and Achitophel" is a prosaic subject : it reveals that Dryden was a very good walker, but he could not fly nicely. Hence he has come to be called a "great flawed poet".

The Medal. In spite of " Absalom and Achitophel," Shaftesbury was acquitted, and became the popular hero of the day. A medal was struck off with his head and name on one side, the sun issuing from the clouds, on the other. This was the occasion of Dyrden's "The Medal, a Satire against Sedition." It is a bitter invective againt Shaftesbury, its theme the medal which his partisans had very naturally presented to Shaftesbury. It is entirely in a serious vein, and wants the grace and urbanity of some parts of "Absalom," but it is in no way inferior as a piece of strong, vehement satire. Dr. Johnson's criticism of it still holds good : "It is now (1780) not much read, nor perhaps generally understood ; yet, a slight acquaintance with the history of the period removes all obscurity ; and though we cannot sympathise with the fervour of politics which it contains, the poetry has claims to popularity widely independent of the temporary nature of the subject.

MacFlecknoe : This poem inaugurates a form of satire—the personal recriminations of literary men. Dryden describes his official abdication of the throne of dullness in favour of Shadwell, who succeeds under the obvious title of MacFlecknoe, a scribbling priest whose name had become synonymous with poetaster had lately died, and Dryden represent him as nominating Shadwell. The poem is extremely coarse and violent, but it contains some genuine humour which seems to detach itself from the bitterness of

the rest, and to appeal to us on its own merits. Beyond this, it supplies a valuable commentary upon the dramatic literature of the day. *It is their topical character that renders Dryden's poems so completely interesting from every point of view.*

Didactic Poems : We must now pass to religious poems. The "Religio Laici" and "The Hind and the Panther" are written from a diametrically opposite side of the question ; between them lies a great change of religious opinion with all the struggle for conviction which of necessity accompany it :

Religio Laici is a poem which states his faith, and his reasons for his faith as a member of the Church of England. The spirit of theological controversy was bred in the bone of the seventeenth century.

The Hind and thePanther is a defence, under the form of a fable, or allegory, of the Roman Catholic Church in which the Hind stood for the Church of Rome and the Panther for the Church of England.

Lyric Poetry : The Principal examples of his lyrical magnificence which he has given are the elegy on "Anne Killigrew" and the two odes on "*St. Cecilia's Day*" and "*Allexander's Feast*" The second ode is the most 'poetic' of all Dryden's writing, in its depicting of the various passions and the arousing of sympathetic emotion in the reader. 'Everyone recognises its claim to rank among the greater odes in the language—the greatest perhaps, until Wordsworth and Shelley wrote, and little, if at all, beyond even them. Johnson, indeed, prefers the memorial elegy on "Anne Killigrew", and Mr. Saintsbury, praising it, says "As a piece of concentrated music in verse it has not a superior." In Dryden, one can find in an age of prose, a true lyrical poet, the melody of whose lyrics and songs, reminds one of Elizabethan Poetry. *Dryden was the one poet of his day who could occasionally, not always, sing as the bird sings* ; he was the poet of a prosaic time. (*Adapted.*)

Q. 2. Write a note on Dryden as a Lyricist taking special note of his odes included in your poetry book.

Ans. The poems included in the text along with two or three others stand in a marked contrast with the bulk of Dryden's poetry which is mainly satirical of narrative. These poems reveal the lyrical powers of Dryden, who, though not an inspired lyricist, could when he chose, strike a tender lyrical note. Though he is best known as a dramatist or satirist, yet **he had a vein of spontaneous lyricism** which could not be stifled even in that phase of his literary career when he concentrated on drama and **which in the years of his maturity became more prominent. In his plays, we come across light short songs and at times inspired stanzas, which have the soaring happiness and a touch of the charming youthfulness of the Cavalier poets;** but in the last fifteen years of his life he wrote a number of beautiful odes and lyrical poems which form a last outstanding group of his poetical works; and the poem included in the text, 'Alexander's Feast' belongs to this group. In the poems of this period we have **'a true inspiration struggling to express itself, with attention to style that is often too minute and artificial'**. His great odes. 'Alexander's Feast', were regarded as masterpieces of lyricism by his contempraries but modern critics have ranked them as only **meritorious pieces of lyrical poetry**. According to Cazamian, the famous 'Alexander's Feast' **is a somewhat too clever masterpiece in imitative harmony; the flexibility, the variety, the wealth of rythmic resources, and of the suggestive methods employed, show the incomparable gifts of Dryden as a versifier.** The odes lack the emotional warmth, imaginative colouring and that quality of ideality which are the essential elements of lyrical poetry though the fire and force which they possess is admirable. The only lyric written by Dryden, which possess these qualities is his ode to the memory of Mr. Anne Killigrew which is steeped in genuine lyrical emotion. Here Dryden strikes his most touching chords. 'No one can read without wonder the beginning and close of this poem, which are

full of an ardour and grandeur of lyric vision in which we feel the breath of Modern Romanticism, while they recall the mystic exaltation of the sacred poets of the 17th century.'

Q. 4. Discuss Dryden as a reasoner in verse.

Ans. Dryden who has been called **'the greatest man of a little age'** was a **versatile genius**. He was a poet, dramatist, critic, satirist, essayist, translator and a miscellaneous writer. His has been described as 'one of the chief founders of modern English prose, the first great English critic, the most representative writer of the Restoration and the greatest literary man ŏf his time. If he is 'seldom poetic (using the word in the sense which we attach to it when we are thinking, say of Coleridge or Keats), he at least gives us many passages of wonderful strength and eloquence' and holds a unique position **as a satirist and a reasoner in verse**. In both these fields Dryden as the author of 'Absalom and 'Achitophel' and 'Religio Laici,' still remains the greatest master.

Dryden's satires and didactic poems rank among the most successful examples of the vigour of his genius and the gift which he possessed to a **supreme degree of reasoning and arguing in verse**. His 'Absalom and Achitophel' is the greatest political verse satire in the English language. It is distinguished by energetic representation of the political principles of both sides, dignified but damaged characterization, deadly wit blazing diction and devastating invective.' It is rich in satirical portraits like that Achitophel which have been regarded as pieces of brilliant wit, pungent irony and severe invective. Here as in the other political satires *e.g.* '*The Medal*' and '*MacFlecknoe*' *exhibits a wonderful genius for versified argumentation and political reasoning invests itself in the gurb of impassioned imagination*.

Dryden's religious satires and didactive poems furnish excellent examples of *virile reflection*, *philosophic ardour*, *clearness of thought and subtle argumentative skill*. His religoius zeal and restrained imagination raise the debate in '*Religio Laici* (*the* piece *Reason* and *Religion* is taken

from this poem) above the 'arid plain in which controversy most willingly linger' to a level of intellectual poetry animated by a singular, grave and noble beauty and an inspired style whose purity and firmness, just like its force and lustre are due to the unique felicity of a nature in which spontaneity had become synonymous with art.' In Dryden, *Critical faculty and creative verse do not impair each other*. Dryden perfected and popularised *the heroic couplet as a vehicle for satirical didactive and argumentative verse*. The measure was employed by most of his successors belonging to the classical school of poetry, but his couplet possessed certain distinguishing features. It was more flexible, less monotonous than Pope's. He made it more rythmical and musical and more effective as a medium for reasoning in verse.

WILLIAM COWPER

(1) Life and works

There is, perhaps, no more pathetic life-story in the history of our literature, than that of William Cowper (1731—1800).

He was born at Great Berkhampstead in November 1731, where his father was rector. As a particularly shy and sensitive child, he was the constant companion of a tender and indulgent mother. The death of his mother when he was six years old, and sufferings imposed upon him by a bullying school-fellow wounded his mind and affected his spirit for good. He was sent to Westminster School where he had Churchill the poet and Warren Hastings as his school-fellows. After leaving school, he studied law. In this way, he drifted twelve years of his life. Towards the end of 1763, his reason gave way and he was sent to a lunatic asylum where he remained for a year. He was now a changed man. He was conscious of the frivolous life he had led in London and ran into the opposite extreme, viz., a life devoted to religious exercises. He went to Huntingdon and became acquainted with the Unwins—a clergyman and his wife. Here he wrote about seventy of the Olney Hymns.

In 1773 a second period of darkness clouded his life for three years, but again he recovered and began to make poetry the business of his life.

In 1782 he published a volume of poems, and the delightful ballad *John Gilpin*. His most well-known work, *The Task*, was published in 1785. From this time Cowper takes his place among our finest English poets.

1796 Mrs. Unwin died, and the gloom of his life became deeper. Three years later his own death relieved him from all troubles and sorrows.

(2) General Criticism on his Poetry.

(*i*) **Characteristics of the poet :** *The school of poetry he belongs to.*—In the technique of his work, Cowper belongs to the old rather than to the new. He shows

neither the power not the wish to break away from old metrical forms. Some of the good qualities of the old school are his : clarity, painstaking care of expression, and on the whole an easy tranquillity of atmosphere. We shall find in his work neither the passion nor the strangeness of the Romantic school. Much of his nature disposed to shape him as a poet of classicism, and with occasional reserves he is far more of a classical poet than a romantic. Yet throughout Cowper's work we feel from time to time a note of something deeper in feeling than meets us even in Thomson, Collins, or Gray.

"There is a tenderness in poems like *My Mother's Picture* that not even Goldsmith in his verses can quite equal ; while his fresh and intimate nature pictures point to a stage in the development of poetic naturalism, more considerable than we find in Thomson, Collins, or Gray."

Matters such as these make it impossible to place Cowper as the adherent of any distinct school. He is a blend of the old and the new, with much of the form of the old and something of the spirit of the new.

(*ii*) **Cowper's Nature-poetry.** Says Stopford Brooke, "Cowper is the first of the poets who loves Nature entirely for her own sake, and in him the mankind as a whole is fully formed." He himself declares in *The Task*, "My descriptions are all from Nature—not one of them second-handed." The outstanding characteristic of his Nature-poetry is in fact a personal and direct treatment. He stands between Thomson and Wordsworth. He possesses the power of painting Nature like Thomson and imbuing it with a feeling which we meet in Wordsworth. There are many lines in *The Task* where we seem to catch the characteristic thought and the philosophic melody of Wordsworth. The following lines are not only in Wordsworth's spirit but show how well Cowper can describe natural scenery

The vault is blue
Without a cloud and white without a speck
The dazzling splendour of the scene below.
... ... Here the heart,

May give a useful lesson to the head.
And learning wiser grow with his books,
Knowledge and wisdom far from being one
Have oft-times no connection. Knowledge dwells
In heads replete with thoughts of other men,
Wisdom in minds attentive to their own.

Truly as Professor Hales puts it : " In an age of poetic conventionality, of shallow theories, of soulless practice, it was Cowper that inspired our poetry with a higher and nobler tone."

(*iii*) **Religious thought the mainspring of Cowper's poetic quality.** Macaulay says, "Religion was the nurse of Cowper." In fact, it was the religious nature of his poetry that brought him reputation. There is an intimate connection between Cowper's religion and his poetry. His view of life in Nature is coloured by his sense of sin and misery, and thus he could bring back the sense of mystery and marvel in Nature. This religious thought is the mainspring of Cowper's poetic quality. He is never gloomy in his poem, but the influence of religion is seen in his tranquil state of mind and his love for common and ordinary objects—for the simple pleasures of the fireside and a restful country life. Without this love for Nature and tranquillity, he would never have occupied the high place he now holds in the realm of English poetry.

(*iv*) **His Love for Animals**. His love for Nature is coupled with his love for animals. In *The Task* he says—

I would not enter on my list of friends
....
....the man
Who needlessly sets foot upon a worm.

Cowper feels a genuine affection and love for animals whose voiceless troubles not only move him to tears and pity but also fill him with an indignation, almost angelic and divine in its nature, against the cruelty of man who hunts such innocent creatures simply for the sake of sport or gain. Cowper's hares have become famous in English literature,

and our love and pity and sympathy for them are immortalized. Cowper was perhaps the first poet to humanise animals. He felt kinship with them, made them our teachers and friends, watched their innocent pranks and ways with a tender smile, and beautified and inhabited his landscapes with their presence. Wordsworth and Coleridge simply followed the lead taken by Cowper in this matter.

(*v*) **The positive qualities in Cowper's work**. What are the positive qualities in Cowper's work ? He excelled in the delineation of the quiet backwaters of life, in investing the commonplace with tenderness and grace, in rendering with fresh unpretentious beauty the familiar scenes of everyday existence. The restraint, the easy lucidity of his best work are undeniable.

> No noise is here, or none that hinders thought,
> The redbreast warbles still, but is content
> With slender notes, and more than half-suppress'd
> Pleased with his solitude, and flitting light
> From spray to spray, where'er he rests he shakes
> From many a twig the pendent drops of ice,
> That tinkle in the wither'd leaves below,
> Stillness, accompanied with sounds so soft,
> Charms more than silence.

In its own way, the way of careful observation and sensitive poetic feeling, it would be hard to better such a passage. Certainly in his nature pictures there is a large measure of that healing power, which John Stuart Mill found in Wordsworth. Lacking the vision of Wordsworth and the imaginative height, he is singularly like him in cool, peaceful, unforced magic.

His best poetry in *The Task* and *The Winter Walk* reflects the quiet, deliberate charm of "old haunted meadows" amid which he lived. He seemed to have absorbed into his being the homely charms of these rural parts, and his verse goes on its way with the leisurely rhythm of the slow-moving Ouse, neither grand nor varied, but gently persuasive and soothing. (*Adapted*).

1. THE POPLAR FIELD

(1) Introduction

The Poplar is a tall tree with a straight trunk and has quick growth. It is a poem of past memories which incite thoughts of the life of man. The poet remembers the field of Poplar trees that once stood there. But the trees have now been cut down and he sits on the trunk of one of them. This sets a train of thoughts in his mind of the beautiful scene that is no more and from these thoughts he is led on to reflect on the transitory nature of man's existence on earth. Man's life and his joys are short-lived ; his pleasures especially are still shorter.

(2) Summary

The poet remembers the shady grove of Poplar trees that once covered the field. It has now been cut down and the winds no longer play and sing nor does its shadow fall on the river nearby. It was the favourite field of the poet but he did not see it for the last twelve years. He was now sitting on the trunk of a cut-down tree. He sadly remembers that he can no more listen to the sweet songs of the blackbird. Then he begins to reflect that his own life is hasting away. He would soon die and be covered with a turf before another grove of Poplar trees grows there. This change brings home the idea that man's life and joys are short-lived ; his pleasures have a very short period and die even sooner than he.

(3) Notes and Explanations

Stanza 1. *The Poplars*—Poplar is a genus of trees with tall straight trunks and found by the valleys or foot-hills (Urdu "Chunar"). *Fell'd*—felled, that is, have been cut down. *Farewell to the shade*—there is no more shade. *Whispering sound*—soft sound produced in the passage of wind, etc. *Colonade*—a double row of trees placed at regular intervals. *Ouse*—the name of stream that passes through that field. **Expl.** *Nor Ouse......receives*—when

the grove of trees stood there its shadow fell on the river and found a reflection on the surface of it. But now its shade no longer finds a reflection on the river Ouse.

Stanza 2. *Elapsed*—passed. *Since I......view*—since I saw it last time. *My favourite field*—the field which I liked so much. *Behold*—see. *Now in......laid*—the trees I loved so much have now been cut down and their trunks are lying among the grass in the field. *And the tree......shade*—when the tree stood in the grove I used to sit under its shade but now I am sitting on the trunk of it.

Stanza 3. *The blackbird*—a kind of song bird found all over Europe. *To another retreat*—to another place of shelter and rest. *Hazel*—a kind of tree. *Afford him...... heat*—give him protection against the heat of the sun, *i.e.*, it lives among the shade of the grove of Hazel trees. *Melody*—sweet songs. *Resounds*—echoes. *Ditty*—song. **Expl**. *And the scene......no more*—the scene where I was charmed by the sweet songs of this bird is not echoed by the sounds of his songs.

Stanza 4. *Fugitive*—fast running. *My fugitive...... away*—my life is also running fast and soon coming to its end. *Ere long*—before long. *As they*—as the trees which have been cut down. *With a turf......breast*—when I am buried in the grave a crop of grass will grow over it and cover the grave as well as my body. *And a stone......head*—the tombstone will stand near my head bearing the epitaph. *Ere another......stead*—(I shall be dead) before another grove of this kind shall grow up in its place, *i.e.*, before the growth of the next crop of the trees.

Stanza 5. *The change......employs*—the change produced by the cutting down of these trees has affected my mind deeply and it has excited my imagination. *Fancy*—imagination. *Frailty*—weakness ; mortality. *I reflect...... joys*—I begin to think that man and his joys are also going to end very soon. **Expl**. *Short-lived as......than we*—we have a short span of years to pass in this world, yet we see that our pleasures are more short-lived. They die even much before our death.

(4) Paraphrase

Stanza 1. The Poplar trees have been cut down. There is no more the shade of the grove and no more the soft sound that was audible in the regular columns of trees. The winds used to play and sing in the leaves, which does not do so now. The shadow of the clump of trees is no more reflected on the surface of the river Ouse.

Stanza 2. Twelve years have passed since I last saw this spot and the bank of the river where the trees grow, both of which I liked so much. And now you can see those trees lying down among the grass in the field and I am now sitting on the trunk of a trees which once gave me shade.

Stanza 3. The blackbird has now gone to another grove of trees which provides it a place of shelter and rest and the Hazel trees shield him from the heat of the sun. I was often charmed on this place with the sweet songs of the bird but it is deserted now and the echoes of his song are no longer heard.

Stanza 4. The years of my life are also running away very fast and before long I shall be lying humbly as the trunks of trees. The grass will grow over my body and a tombstone will stand near my head before another such grove of trees will grow in place of the one that has been cut down.

Stanza 5. The change produced in this scene has deeply affected my mind and my imagination. I begin to think of the mortality of man and joys. Though we have a very short life, yet our pleasures have a still shorter period and they die even before we die.

(5) Critical Appreciation

This is a poem truly in the strain of the famous *Elegy written in a Country Churchyard*. Cowper belonged to the age of translation and along with Gray. Collins, Burns and others blended the classical tradition with the new note of romanticism. There is the melancholy and sadness of the classical poets to be found in this poem and there is the

love of nature, the love of flora and fauna which forms the major charm of this piece. The purity of form and regularity of metres reminds one of the style of Pope and yet the love of Nature foreshadows the poetry of Wordsworth. Thus there is a happy blending of Classicism with Romanticism in this poem.

It is a poem of sweet memories of the past which make the poet conscious of the shortness of life. The change produced in the scenes brings home the idea that man's existence on earth is short lived, but even more so are his pleasures. They have a still more delicate texture and vanish in a moment. They die even before the death of man occurs. These reflections lend a peculiar charm to the poem.

(6) Points to Remember

1. The poplars have been cut down and their cool shade has vanished with them.

2. From the wood of the trees benches have been made on which the poet sat after an interval of twelve years.

3. The blackbirds used to sing in the leaves of those trees but now they have migrated to some other place where they can protect themselves from the heat of the sun.

4. The poet thinks that his life like the poplars will come to an end.

5. There has been a great change in the place after the trees have been cut down.

6. Human life is as short as any object of nature.

7. The pleasures of a man are more short-lived than his life.

(7) Recapitulatory Questions

Q. 1. What has happened after the poplars have been felled?

(Shade has vanished. Breezes no longer blow in the leaves of the trees. The reflection of the trees does not fall in the water of river Ouse).

Q. 2. What has happend to the Trees?

(Now the trees are used as seats because they have been converted into benches).

Q. 3. What thoughts are produced in the mind of the poet?

(The thoughts of the frailty of man and his joys).

Q. 4. Why has the blackbird migrated?

(Because it cannot find any shade).

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2. ON RECEIPT OF MY MOTHER'S PICTURE

(1) Introduction

These lines were written by Cowper in getting his mother's picture which come to him from Norfolk. He looked at the picture and this remind him of his mother's love and affection for him. He is reminded how his mother used to help him whenever she found him in difficulty. The picture becomes for him a symbol of maternal love.

(2) Central Idia

My mother's picture can soothe me in my troubles, because through my poetic imigination I can take it to be my mother herself and live over the happy days of my childhood again.

(3) Critical Appreciation

Cowper says about this poem that parhaps this is " a frame memorial, but sincere". Well, we can say it is both

sincere and a lasting memorial. Cowper said that this memorial may not be prized on this earth, but will be welcome to his mother's soul and other souls residing in Heaven. But time has revealed the fact that this tribute to his mother's sacred memory has an abiding place in English literature. It is the innocent outburst of a sincere heart containing the sacred sentiment of one who was extremely sensitive alike to affection and harted. The poem is highly personal, and intensely pathetic. The emotions are absolutely genuine, and the language singularly free from affectation "Even where lightness and grace are wanting, the virtue of truthfulness never deserts the poet. Indeed at times we find the poet's language suffering from his anxiety to be quite unartificial. "The poem was written at the age of 58, and so it reveals the particular hold which his mother's affection had on him. Nearly fifty years after his mother's death, Cowper said, " I can truly say that not a week passes in which I do not think of her : such was the impression her tenderness made upon me, though the opportunity she had for showing it was so short."

(4) Notes and Explanations

Analysis. *Lines* (*1 to 20*)—This picture is an exact reproduction of my mother, and is only wanting in her voice. Since it is an unexpected guest in my house, I would compose a poem in its honour, and in my poetic fancy take it to be my real mother.

Notes. *Lines 1 to 20.—Oh...language*—how I wish that those lips of her in that picture could have the power of speech. *But roughly*—altogether roughly. 'But her' signifies 'nothing but'. *Since I heard thee last*—since you died. *Are thine*—are exactly like yours. *Voice...away*—it is wanting only in voice otherwise I can imagine it would say to me "O my child do not despair because of your physical and mental troubles. Brush away all your fears because your future is bright." *Immortalise*—make those eyes of hers live for ever. *The art .....claim*—the art of painting that can overcome forgetfulness which time brings in, can keep her memory always alive. *To*

quench it—to kill the light of these eyes. Here is a tussle between Nature and Art. Art seems to triumph over Nature's tendency to obliterate the memory of Cowper's dead mother. *Here......same*—her eyes in this picture seem to look at me just as they used to when I was a child. *Faithful......dear*—this picture is so exact that it reminds me of my mother just as she was. *O welcome guest*—The poet welcomes the picture as a guest because he would keep it carefully in his house and show the same consideration to it as he would pay to an honoured guest. *Though unexpected*—I never expected that I would be able to look at my mother's face just as she was fifty year ago. *Who......song*—This picture makes me honour it with this simple poem of mine which is a sincere effusion of my heart. *Not willingly..... gladly*—not only with all my will but with great pleasure. *As......own*—as if this was her command to me. *While that...... grief*—although her face in this picture revives my grief for her as a son. *The Elysian reverie*—waking dream of the gods in Elysium or Paradise. *And while... thou art she—Explanation.*—As Cowper looked at his mother's picture his filial grief was revived. But the occasion of the receipt of this picture proved advantageous also. It made him sad, but at the same time for a moment he could enjoy the waking dream which the gods have in paradise, inasmuch as his poetic fancy transformed her picture into his mother in flesh and blood. In this way for a moment at least his grief for her was removed.

Analysis. *Lines 21 to 44.*—My fancy tells me that my mother's soul wept for me at the time of her final departure from this world. For sometime I fondly believed that she would come back in spite of my meeting with disappointment day after day. But ultimately I resigned my self to my fate.

Notes. *Lines 21 to 44.*— *Wretch even then*—even then I was a weakling and suffered from physical pain. *Unseen*—in the form of spirit. *If......bliss*—If it is at all possible for soul to weep because they are said to enjoy perpetual

happiness, unlike mortal beings. *It answers, yes*—my poetic fancy makes me think that she says 'yes' to my question, *i. e.*, she did weep for me and kiss me at her departure from this world.

The bell—the funeral bell, knell. *But......it was*—it was indeed a last farewell. *Where thou art gone—viz.*, Heaven. *Are a sound unknown*—have no meaning, as souls are immortal. *That peaceful shore—viz.*, Elysium, the Greek Island in the Far West where the sun goes down. It was the abode of the blessed souls after death. *The parting sound*—the word 'adieu.' *Thy......concern*—your female friends (all my nurses) were sorry at my troublod look over your death and were anxious about me. *Of a quick return*—that you would return very soon. *What ardently......from a child—Explanation*—My nurses assure me of your return, and I believed it because this was what I fondly desired. But herein I was disappointed, and yet with each disappointment I was deceived into the belief that you would some day come back. The fact was that even when I was disappointed I did not leave the expectation of your coming back into this world. In that hope I spent my days of my childhood, so that even from my childhood I have been befooled by a bright future which never came. In line 40, according to another version of the text, the word 'disappointment' should be changed into 'expectation.' But this does not materially alter the meaning. *Sad to-morrow*—Every expectation proved a disappointment. *Sorrow spent*—my sorrow as an infant being exhausted. *Submisson to my lot*—resignation to my fate. *But...forgot*—Though the intensity of my grief grew less, I never forgot you. This statement is quite true as Cowper always retained the fondest memory of his mother.

Analysis *Lines 45 to 72*—The house where I spent my childhood has gone out of my possession, but the memory of your many kindnesses to me while I was there would never pass out of my possession. I write this poem, therefore, not only out of a sense of duty, but also out of genuine joy.

Notes. *Lines 46 to 72—Where once we dwelt*—Great Berkhamstead, Hertfordshire. *Children......float*—other peoples' children have occupied my nursery room. *Drew me*—took me against my will. *Delighted*—made me feel happy. *Bauble*—toy. This is connected with the word 'babe.' *Velvet capt*—capped in velvet, *i. e.*, feeling quite comfortable in my scarlet mantle and velvet cap. *Pastoral house*—Cowper's father was a rector of that place. *Short lived possession...... .deeply traced—Explanation.*— The house where I spent my childhood has gone out of my possession, but the memory of my mother's kindness during my childhood associated with that house, is permanently imprinted on my soul. Physical and mental trouble, even madness, seized me, but they have not been able to efface the memory of my mother. The bitter struggles of my life made me forget many other brilliant episodes of my life, but not the days of my childhood spent in company of my mother, because that was the brightest episode of my life. *Thy morning bounties*—your gifts to me early in the morning. *Bestowed*—showered like a bounty. *Roughened*—marred, temporarily disturbed. *Cataracts and breaks*—waterfalls and thickets that obstruct the channel of a river. *Humour interposed*—homour here means 'anger.' Anger interferes with love. *Thy constant... ...too often makes—Explanation.*—your love towards me was always the same even when you grew angry. Generally with the change of mood love fluctuates, but you never grew so moody as to change your love towards me. Here the mother's love is compared to the stream of a river that flows on, always on the same level, without being disturbed by rocks and thickets. Just as the obstructions in the channel of a river roughen its surface, similarly an adverse mood of anger temporarily mars the flow of love. But this was not so in the case of Cowper's mother, and this seemed to him to be his brightest association of her. *Legible...... page*—branded on my soul *And still......age*—and in order to keep this memory alive right up to the end of my life. *Adds joy to duty*—I write this poem not only as a duty, but because I feel immense pleasure in doing so. *Numbers*—verses. *A frail memorial*—these verses may be forgotten.

Not scorned in Heaven—my mother's soul in Heaven would not scorn these verses. *Here*—on this earth.

Analysis, *Lines 73 to 86.*—I sometimes wish that the joyful hours of my childhood spent with you may be revived, but then I desist from doing so because that would cramp your spirit once more by the material bondage of this world.

Notes. *Lines 73 to 86—His flight reversed*—moving backwards. *Restore the hours*—bring back those hours. *Vesture*—skirt (poetic). *Tissued*—finely woven. *Pink*—a kind of flower. *I pricked......a pin*—I imitated the flowers woven on your skirt by pricking the paper with pins. *The while*—for the moment. *Might one wish bring them*—and one wish of mine be able to bring those hours back. *Seems so......I might*—I feel the delight of those hours so much that I may after all wish them back to be here. *But no*—but ultimately I decide not to wish them back. *Our life is such*—our life is so devoid of happiness and love. *Thou so much*—you are so full of love and enjoying heavenly bliss. *Ill requite thee*—it would be a poor return of your kindness to me to check the freedom of your soul in bringing it once more on this earth. *Could time......into bonds again—Paraphrase.*—If the movement of time could be reversed backwards, then I could bring back those hours when playing with your skirt I began to imitate the different flowers woven into your skirt by pricking pins into paper. At those moments you were happier than myself, and would gently speak to me stroking my head and smiled at my childish act. One wish of mine may be able to bring back those pleasant hours, but would I actually like them to come back to me in this vile world, where true love is absent. Moreover, if I had those hours back again, I would not trust myself, as the pleasure may be too much for me to bear. The desire to bring back those hours is so intense, that perhaps I may wish them back. But no, I should not have a wish like this, because our life on this earth is so devoid of love, and you are so full of love and bliss. It would be a poor recompense of your kindness to me if I bring your free spirit again into bondage.

(5) Summary

The poet says if the picture had been able to speak she would surely have encouraged him to put up with his sad lot. She would surely have given him faith and encouragement to put up with his sad lot. He tells his mother that he would willingly carried out all the orders given by her.

(3) Paraphrase

Looking at the picture the poet passionately desires that the lips of the picture might be blessed with speech. Life since her death had been hard for him. Those lips were of his mother and smile was her own, it was the same smile which in his childhood had given him solace and comfort. Voice is missing otherwise the lips appear to be giving him the message that he should not feel sad and should drive away all his fears. The humble intelligence that came out from her eyes (the poet blessed the art of portrait painting which could baffle time and annal its effects) shone on him quite in the same way as it did when she was alive. The poet calls the picture a reminder which brought back to his mind his dear mother who was dead and gone. The poet calls the picture a welcome guest though he had not expected to receive it in that place. It was the picture of his mother whom he loved so much and whom he had lost long ago. He would even after the lapse of such a long time, obey her instructions and he would do so willingly and happily. The vision of that fact once again revived the sorrow of a son on the death of his mother; but through his imagination he would perpare some charm that would lessen his pain and sorrow.

(7) Recapitultory Questions

Q. 1. Why does Cowper's Poem on his mother appeal to us so much ?

Ans. Reproduce the Critical Appreciation.

Q. 2. What sentiment does Cowpere xpress for his mother in this poem ?

Ans. Reproduee the whole Analysis.

3. ALEXANDER SELKIRK

(1) Introduction

Alexander Selkirk is not a fictitious character. He was a real person who lived from 1676 to 1721. He was the son of a Scotch shoemaker who spelt the surname as Selcraig. Alexander Selkirk ran away to sea and joined a privateering expedition in 1703. However, he soon quarrelled with his captain and at his own request he was put ashore on the uninhabited island of Juan Fernandez in 1704 and remained there till 1709 when he was rescued by Capt. Rogers. Alexander Selkirk's experience during the period he had remained stranded formed the basis of Robinson Crusoe by Daniel Defoe (1660-1731). Cowper's poem is on the same subject but his approach is radically different.

(2) Central Idea

Solitude may be good to think about, but in actual life it is the most horrible experience one can have.

(3) Substance

Alexander Selkirk is homesick. He tells how solitude weighs upon his mind. He has learnt to value human society. He longs to go back to his native land to enjoy society, friendship and love so that he might manage to mitigate his sorrows. He pays a tribute to the flight of fancy which came to take him to his home with the speed of lightning. But reality soon wakes him up and brings him back to despair. In this state he finds consolation with the approach of night which has brought him rest.

(4) Summary

The stranded sailor, Elexander Selkirk, finds himself the monarch of an island which has no other human inhabitant. He finds this island kingdom a horrible place to live in and laments his sad fate. In this solitude, which was gnawing at his heart, he learns to value society, friendship and love. He wishes he could have wings of a dove so that he might go back to his homeland. He implores

the winds to bring him some good tidings about the land to which he shall never more pay a visit. Though now he can have no hope of seeing a friend again, yet he would like to know if any of his friends sends a wish or thought after him. The flight of fancy can transport him to his native land with the speed of lightning, but a recollection of the hard reality around him swiftly sends him back to despair. However, nightfall soon brings him rest. He thanks God's mercy which gives a grace even to agony and reconciles man to his fate.

(5) Paraphrase

St. 1. I am the ruler of everything that lies within my purview. Nobody can challenge my right to the sovereignty of this land. I am the master of all the birds of the air and of animals living on the land whose home lies in the area circumscribed by the seashore. But I should like to pose one question to solitude. Where are all those attractions which wise men of all ages have seen in its face ?. As for me, I have come to believe that it is better to live in company even though there might be danger signals, rather than be a ruler in such a place.

St. 2. I am so stranded that no man or woman can ever get here. I am doomed to run the course of my life here alone. I shall never more here any spoken words, though in my solitary state they would sound to my ears as sweet as music. I am so unused to hearing any spoken words that sounds of my own sometimes startle me. It causes me a strong feeling of horror to see the harklessness of these beasts. They are so unacquainted with man that my presence does not cause them the least concern.

St. 3. Society, friendship and love are the gifts of god to man. I only wish that I had the wings of a dove. I would then swiftly fly to a place where I could get these things. If only I could have these things, I would mitigate my grief by the precepts of religion and the concepts of truth. There I might gather the wisdom of aged persons and enjoy the outbursts of young people's animal spirits.

St. 4. William Cowper expresses his curiosity to know what is in the Heaven ! Addressing Religion, he asked about the heavenly-treasures which are not known to the living humanity as yet. He, however, was confident that those treasures must be more valuable than any kind of wealth, here on the Earth.

He envied the sound and calm life of Nature : like valleys and rocks, which remain unconcerned with human-bindings of church-going, the fears of death and the joys of relief.

St. 5. O winds, you have made me your play-thing. Be it as it may, at least bring me the glad and heartening tidings of a country which I shall never more be able to visit. Do my friends even occasionally think of me and express a desire for my welfare ? I shall never see any friend again. Still I would like to know from you if there is anybody who continues to harbour friendly feelings for me ?

St. 6. The flight of fancy is very swift. It is so swift that even a violent storm swiftly travelling as rays of light fail to keep up with it. When I give reins to my fancy and think of my native land, I have the sensation of being there in no time. But the recollection of the gross reality of my surrounding suddenly brings me back to my state of despondency.

St. 7. Lo the night has come. The sea birds have gone to their nests and the animals of the land to their dens for the night. This is the time for rest and I too must go back to my hut. There is no place devoid of divine mercy and this is indeed very heartening. The mercy of God lends a charming quality even to misery. It is this mercy which makes a person resigned to his fate.

Alexander Selkirk.—1676-1721. He was the son of John Selcraig, shoemaker of Largo. He ran away to sea and joined the privateering expedition of Captain William Dampier in 1703. He quarrelled with his Captain, Thomas Stradling. He was, at his own request, put ashore on the

uninhabited island of Juan Fernandes in 1704 and remained there until 1709. He was rescued by Captain W. Rogers. His experiences formed the basis of Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe.*

(6) Note and Explanations

Stanza 1. *Solitud*—being without companions. *Monarch*—king, supreme ruler. *Right*—little. *Dispute*—question. There is no one in the island to question my authority. I am the absolute king of this place. *Brute*—beasts. *Solitude*—loneliness. *Have seen in thy face*—have found in you. *Dwell*—live. Selkirk believes that there is no attraction in being lonely. It is better to live in a troubled society than rule in an island all alone. He finds no charm in solitude of which the poets and the wisemen have talked. Solitude is very irksome and troublesome. He finds no pleasure in loneliness.

Stanza 2. *Start*—make a sudden movement from fear or pain. *Roam*—wander. *Form*—figure. *Unacquainted*—unfamiliar. *Tameness*—gentleness. *Shocking*—gives me a shock; does not please me.

Stanza 3. *Bestowed upon man*—given to man. *Assuage*—make less. *Sallies*—witty remarks. *Cheered*—feel happy; get pleasure. Friendship, love and society are the gifts of God. If God were to furnish me with wings I would fly and associate with human beings. I would lead a religious life and follow a truthful path and thereby relieve myself of the burden of the world. I will enjoy the witty remarks of young men and learn the wisdom from old and elderly people.

Stanza 4. *Untold*—which were never described. *Unimaginable*—unlimilted. *Precious*—Costly, worthy. *Afford*—provide. *Knell*—calling of the church.

Stanza 5. *Convey*—communicate. *Desolate*—forsaken. *Cordial*—giving fresh life and strength. *Endearing*—giving pleasure. *Of a land I shall visit no more*—my native soil. *Now and then*—occasionally.

Stanza 6. *Fleet*—quick. *Tempest*—storm. *Lags behind*—fails to keep pace with. *Arrows of light*—rays of light. *Despair*—disappointment.

Imagination is very quick. It is quicker than the storm of the rays of light.

Stanza 7. *Lair*—resting place of a wild animal ; den. *Cabin*—log room. *Mercy*—gentleness. *Affliction*—suffering. *Gives a grace*—makes pleasant.

(7) Critical Appreciation

Pope have waxed eloquent in the praise of solitrude but we find a radically different approach to this subject in Cowper's poem. He tells how miserable a really solitary person can be. It is in such forced loneliness that one learns to value society, friendship and love. A person like Alexander Selkirk could maintain his contact with mankind only though giving reins to his imagination. But this mental escape only served to heighten his despair when he woke up to the realisation of the hard fact of his life. Were it not for a sleep which is a divine mercy, he would not have found it possible to endure the misery of his loneliness. Cowper's exposition of his thesis is based on the life history of a Sailor of his time. This realistic basis; coupled with his noval approach and vigorous style, has given *The Solitude* of *Alexander Silkirk* a permanent place in English literature.

(8) Recapitulatory Questions

Q. (1) What were the thoughts of Alexander Silkirk is his insular life?

Ans. See Summary.

Q. (2) Explain with reference to the context :-

How fleet is a glance of the mind !
Compared with the speed of its flight,
The tempest itself lags behind,
And the swift-winged arrows of light.
When I think of my own native land,

In a moment I seem to be there,
But alas ! recollection at hand
Soon hurries me back to despair.

Ans. This stanza occurs in the poem '*The Solitude of Alexander Selkirk*' by Cowper.

Alexander Selkirk is totally disgusted with the burden of solitude that he has to bear in the island. Apparently, he is the king and the ruler of the island and the birds and the beasts acknowledge his authority, but he finds absolutely no charm and attraction in loneliness. He feels himself in a prison. He longs for human society, its pleasures, attractions and advantages. He is so despaired of his stay that he requests the wind to act as a massenger and bring happy news from his native land.

Then he gives himself to musing (thinking) and re-creates the land of his birth and his friends in his imagination. The faculty of imigination is quicker than the storms of the sea and the rays of light which travel at a tremendous speed. As soon as he thinks of his native soil he reaches there in imagination, but again he finds himself back in his dismal (dark) surroundings.

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4. THE DIVERTING HISTORY OF JOHN GILPIN

(1) Introduction

The poem relates the ride of John Gilpin on horseback from his home to Edmontion where his wife had gone to celebrate her wedding anniversary after 20 years. John Gilpin had never ridden a horse and could not manage a horse well. The ride was so ridiculous that the boys in the streets cried and the dogs barked. Some people humorously remarked that he was running a race. This idea was suggested to them by the two wine bottles hanging on each side. John Gilpin lost his cloak, hat and wig as the horse sped past. The horse did not stop at Edmonton but straightway went to the house of his owner, who was a friend of

John Gilpin. He gave his wig and cap to Gilpin but they also were blown away by the wind. Again the horse passed by Edmonton and Mistress Gilpin asked the postboy to bring her husband back. With the postboy at his heels, he looked like a highwayman making good his escape. He came back to his place earlier than his wife. It was really a race as the people had declared because he won it by reaching his home earlier than his wife.

(2) Summary

John Gilpin was a resident of London. He was a linen draper and was the Captain of the band of the town. Once his wife proposed to him that they should enjoy their wedding anniversary as they had not celebrated one for the last 20 years. A chaise was brought. It became full because six persons had to occupy it. John Gilpin borrowed the horse of his friend who was a maker of cloth. Mistress Gilpin, with her sister, nephews and nieces drove away to Edmonton where they had agreed to celebrate the anniversary. As John Gilpin was about to mount his horse some customers dropped in. Having disposed them of he was going to mount again when the maid-servant, Betty, cried out that the wine had been left behind. John Gilpin took the stone bottles and slung them by his side. He wore a red cloak and his sword.

At first, the horse trotted, when he found that the road was smooth he began to gallop. The cloak of Gilpin began to fly like the banner of a ship. The children cried and exclaimed that he was running a race because like jockeys in the race he was carrying weights to keep the balance. The dogs barked. The wine bottles were broken and only their necks remained hanging. The wine flowed down the streets and the sides of the horse began to fume.

Gilpin passed by Edmonton but his horse would not stop there because the real owner of the horse lived at a distance. The hat and the wig of Gilpin had flown away. When his friend found Gilpin without a hat and a wig, he gave him his own hat and wig. The horse again began to run, now both the wig and the hat flew away sooner, because they were far too big for his head.

When again he passed by Edmonton his wife saw him from the projection of the house. She asked the postboy to bring her husband back for which work he would be paid two shillings and six pence. The postboy began to run after John Gilpin. On the way, they met six gentlemen who cried that a thief was running and he was being pursued by a boy.

The whole ride was ridiculous and the people laughed heartily at the pranks of John Gilpin and his horse. The horse did not rest till he came back to the place from where he had started. It was really an amusing race. John Gilpin was the winner of this race. He came earlier to his house than his wife.

(3) Meanings and Explanations

Stanzas 1—2. *Credit*—reputation. *Renown*—fame. *Train-band*—a band of citizens trained to bear arms. *Eke*—also. *Spouse*—wife. *Twice ten tedious years*—20 long and uninteresting years. Mark the alliteration in this line. 'T' has been alliterated three times. It gives the idea of the length of time.

Stanza 3. *Repair*—go. *The Bell*—the name of an inn. *Chaise*—a light open carriage for one or more persons. *Pair*—of horses.

Stanzas 5—10. *Admir*—Appreciate. *Womankind*—all kind of women. *Linen-draper*—here it means an established brave. *quoth*—quote, said. *Furnish*—supply, provide. *Frugal*—thrifty. *Through thick and thin*—at any cost.

Stanza 11. *Smack went the whip*—the whip cracked. *Rattle*—produced short and hard sounds. *Underneath*—below. *Cheapside*—a street of London. The road was stony, therefore, rattling noise issued as the wheels rolled on the stone. There was a great noise.

Stanzas 12—16. *Mane*—long hair on the neck of a horse. *Seized*—caught hold of it firmly. *Saddle tree*—the frame of a saddle. *It grieved him sore*—it pained him very

much. *Pence*—a nickle coin in England. *Were suited to their minds*—agreed to buy what they desired. *Betty*—the name of the maid-servant. *Trusted*—reliable.

Stanzas 17–20. *Careful soul*—Mrs. Gilpin was a very careful peron. She was frugal and thrifty. *Liquor*—wine. *Balance true*—in order to keep his balance right. *Equipped*—dressed. *Top to toe*—head to foot. *Manfully*—bravely. *Mounted*—rode. *Nimble*—quick. *Steed*—horse.

Stanzas 21—26. *Well-shod*—which had been provided with new and good iron shoes. *Snorting*—forcing the air out of the nose. *Trot*—steady pace faster than a walk but not so fast as a gallop. *Gall'd him*—made him sore by rubbing. *Curb*—a chain or strap passing under a horse's chin. *Stooping down*—bending down. *Grasped*—caught. He bent down his head because he could not sit upright. *Neck or nought*—risking everything. (Neck or nothing, in prose). *Set-out*—started. *Rig*—to play a prank. *Streamer*—a flag. *Gay*—bright. *Loop*—hole. *Failing both*—the loop became wide and the button came out of it.

Stanzas 27—32. *Discern*—distinguish. *Slung*—hang. *Up flew the windows all*—all windows were thrown open to see the sight. *Bawl*—cry. *Trice*—moment. *Turnpike*—a gate across the road *Reeking*—perspiring copiously. *Twain*—both, two. *Were shattered*—were broken. *Piteous*—pitiable. *Flanks*—sides. *Basted*—as if fat or butter had been dropped while roasting.

Stanzas 33—38. *Leathern*—consisting of leather. *Gambols*—frolics. *Wash*—a low lying stretch of land. Edmonton was happy because his wife and children were making merry. *Wash*—pool of water lying on the marshy ground. *Trundling*—twirling. *Mop*—a broom. *Unto*—to. *Or a wild goose at play*—just as a wild goose flutters about its wings so the water flew on both sides as the horse of John Gilpin galloped through it. *Spied*—saw. *A whit*—a little. *Inclined*—had no mind to. *Tarry*—to stop. *Ware*—the name of the place where the friend of Gilpin lived.

Stanzas 39—46. *Sore against his will*—very much against his will. *Calender*—maker of cloth. Calender

was the friend of John Gilpin from whom he had borrowed the horse. *Trim*—condition. *Laid down his pipe*—he put aside the pipe that he was smoking. *Flew to the gate*—ran to the gate. *Accosted him*—addresse him. *Tidings*—news. *Bare-head*—without a cap or a wig. *Had a pleasant wit*—was of a humorous bent of mind. *Guise*—manner. *Merry pin*—a small worry. *Returned him not a single word*—did not give any reply to what he said. *A hat not much the worse for wear*—it was not bad on account of wearing. It was quite good to wear. *Needs must fit*—must fit you of necessity.

Stanzas 47—52. *Scrape*—remove. *Hangs upon your face*—has gathered on your face. *Bootless*—useless. *Boast*—proud talk. John Gilpin thought that the horse would obey him and would take him back to his wife. These words, however, proved useless as the horse did not listen to him.

Stanzas 53—63. *Posting down*—hasting. *That drove them to The Bell*—that had driven them to the inn at the sign of the bell. *Post-boy*—postilion ; one who guides horse in any carriage. *At his heel*—behind him. *Lumbering*—rumbling. Heavy sound produced by the wheels. *Fly*—running on the horse. *Scampering*—running. *Rear*—back. *Raised hue and cry*—raised a tremendous shout. *Highwayman*—a robber. *Mute*—silent. *Pursuit*—chase. *Space*—time. *Tollman*—persons who collect toll.

(4) Paraphrase

Stanzas 1—4. John Gilpin was a famous citizen of London. He was the Captain of a band of citizens who were trained to bear arms. One day, John Gilpin's wife said to him, "We have been married twently long years but we have enjoyed no holiday. Tomorrow is the anniversary of our marriage and we will go to The Bell situated at Edmonton. We will drive in carriage drawn by two horses. My sister, myself and three children and my sister's child will occupy the carriage and there will be no room left for you. You should, therefore, come on horse back behind us."

Stanzas 5—10. On listening his wife he immediately replied that he admired all the womanhood. "You are very dear to me and all will be done according to your desire, I am a linen-draper and bold as all world knows this fact. Early in the morning I will lend the horse from my friend". Mrs. Gilpin further said that wine was very pleasing to me and it must be clean and pure. John Gilpin kissed her wife. I would oblidge your wishes. At dawn he brought a chaise, but having the idea that she might not be considered as proud they did not drive the horse at their door. So she waited at a distance of her husband with six other souls, and the chaise was packed with six.

Stanzas 11. The coachman cracked the whip and the wheels of the carriage moved on the road. The children and the people occupying the carriage were very happy. The stones of the road produced a rattling sound and it seemed that the street of Cheapside was mad.

Stanzas 12—16. John Gilpin came near his horse and caught hold of the long hair on its neck. He had hardly mounted his house when he came down. He had hardly

reached the frame of the saddle to begin his journey, when he turned round and saw that three customers had come in his shop. He dismounted from his horse without delay. He was upset and disturbed a little, but he realised that the loss of money would be more unbearable to him. The customers took a pretty long time before they could make up their minds to purchase the articles. In the meantime the maid-servant, Betty, came downstairs and told her master that he was forgetting the wine bottles. He said to her, "Bring the bottles of wine, and my leather belt which I use for my sword when I am taking exercise."

Stanzas 17—19. The wife of Gilpin was a very thrifty woman. She had two stone bottles in her house in which she kept liquor which she liked very much. Each bottle had a curved ear. Gilpin passed his belt through the ears and slung the bottle on either side, so that he may not lose his balance. Having put on his clothes he dressed himself in his large red cloak.

Stanzas 20--29. John Gilpin climbed his horse. It began to pave slowly over the stones very carefully. When the horse found a softer road under his well shod hoofs he began to trot which gave a very hard time to its rider because he was not accustomed to riding. Due to constant jerks he felt pain in his seat. John chid the horse and asked him to run softly, but these words proved futile. Despite the efforts of John Gilpin to stop him, the horse began to gallop. John Gilpin could not sit erect, he, therefore, bent forward and caught hold of the hair on the neck of the horse with all his might. As the horse was not used to be handled thus, he wondered as to what sort of rider he had on him. As the horse galloped at break-neck speed the hat and the false hair on Gilpin's head flew away. When John Gilpin started from his house, he had never imagined that he would have to play such funny pranks. The wind blew furiously and his cloak flew like the banner of a ship. The holes and the buttons of the cloak gave way and it flew away. It might be possible that all men knew that he had slung the bottles of wine at each of his sight as it has been said.

The dogs barked and the children cried with joy. The windows were thrown open and people began to look out for the strange rider and his horse. Every one cried out, "Bravo." As Gilpin sped past, the news spread round that since he was carrying weight on both sides he was running a race on which a bet of a thousand pounds had been laid.

Stanzas 30—33. As Glipin galloped it was a wonderful sight to behold. The toll-gatherers opened the gates so that he may not be obstructed in the race. He was bending down to keep his neck safe. He was perspiring copiously. The bottles were broken and the wine flowed down. The sides of the horse were covered with spirit and smoke issued out of them as if some meat was being roasted. Though the bottle of wine was flowing, but it seemed as though he was not weightless, because he was holding the leather bridle in his hand.

Stanzas 34—37. Throughout the area of Islington, John Gilpin played these pranks till he came to the low-lying area of the land of beautiful Edmonton. As his horse passed through the pools of water, the swish of water lóoked like a wild goose playing in water and spluttering it like twirling broom. As Gilpin passed through Edmonton his wife saw him from the projection of the house. She wondered how her dear husband was riding in a pitiable manner. The wife of Gilpin, her sister and the children cried out, "John Gilpin ! stop, because you have come to the house where the festival was going to take place. The dinner is ready and we are all tired for having waited for you for such a long time." Gilpin humorously remarked, "I am also tired."

Stanzas 38—49. The horse was not at all minded to stop there. His master, the calender, lived at Ware which was at a distance of 10 miles from that place. Since the horse did not stop there, John Gilpin was ridden away against his will. He was breathless. At last the horse came to the house of his master and stood there. The calender wondered to see his friend and neighbour in such a condition, without hat and wig. He put away his smoking pipe and ran to the gate at once and said to him, "What is the matter with you? What news have you brought? Tell me what has happened to you. Why have you come and where are your hat and wig?" John Gilpin was a humorous person and loved to crack a joke. He said to his friend very pleasantly "I have not come of my own will but your horse has brought me to this place. My wig and hat are on the road and I have a feeling that they will be soon here. Since the horse has come to this place so the wig and the hat must also be here". The calender, who was very pleased to see his friend did not stop there but went inside and brought his own hat and wig. Both these articles were not bad to wear. He showed them to him and remarked in a jocular manner, "My head is twice as big as yours, they must, therefore, fit you. Let me remove the dirt which has gathered on your face. Stop in my house and have something to eat because I feel that you must be

hungry." John Gilpin replied, "It is the anniversary of my marriage. I must, therefore, dine with my wife at Edmonton. People will wonder if I dine at the house of a friend and my wife dines without me."

Stanza 50—53. John Gilpin turned to his horse and said to him, "I am in a hurry to dine. You come to this place of your own sweet will. Now it is your turn to abide by my wish and take me back to my wife." It was a useless talk and hollow pride. As he uttered these words a donkey began to cry very loudly. The horse of John Gilpin forced the air out of his nose so tremendously as if it was the roar of a lion. Scared and terrified by the noise of the donkey John Gilpin's horse began to run as fast as he had done before. The hat and the wig which he was now wearing were loose. They, theorefore, flew away sooner than the first ones.

Stanza 54—61. Again the horse and his rider passed by Edmonton. His wife agaln saw him. She did not lose time but took out two shillings and six pence and give it to the young boy who had driven them to the inn of Bell. She said to him, "If you bring my husband back safe and sound I will give you this silver coin as a reward". The boy overtook John Gilpin and tried to catch hold of the bridle of his horse. The boy did not mean to frighten the horse by doing this, but, as ill-luck would have it, the animal of the John Gilpin took fright and began to run faster. John Gilpin's horse was running at full gallop. Close behind him was the boy riding on his horse. His horse also began to run very fast because he was not pulling any carriage behind him. Six gentleman happened to pass on that road. When they saw John Gilpin being pursued by the boy they raised loud noise and said, "O thief, stop". They all caried together Lots of people gathered and gave chase to John Gilpin thinking that he was a robber and a thief. Again John Gilpin had to pass through the gates of the octroi and the tollmen threw their gates wide open because they had already seen him. They still thought that he was running a race.

Stanzas 62—63. John Gilpin was really running a race. His wife had gone away on the chaise and he was riding a horse. He was the first to return home in the evening.

Long live John Gilpin! because he ran such an amusing race and long live the King of England. I very much wish to see John Gilpin if he rides next time.

(5) Critical Appreciation

The poem '*John Gilpin*' by William Cowper is a mock-ballad, The poem has been written in the style of a ballad. The theme of the ballad, as we know, is generally some heroic or a brave deed done in the past by a knight. It has a tinge of romance in it. In this case, we find that the material is the same. There is the ride on the horse and there is a woman in the story. It has been handled so skilfully by Cowper that it is difficult to find its likeness in the English literature. Sir Max Bearbohm has mentioned this amusing ride in his broadcast essay Speed. There are very few instances of such a humorous ride in English literature. The poem is fresh and beautiful like the bright wings of a butterfly. As a piece of humorous verse it is unsurpassed.

As has been stated above Cowper is considered as one of the best descriptive poets of English. We can mark in this poem his unique power of description. At every stage in Gilpin's ride the description given by him is impressive and lively. It is for this reason that the poem has been very popular. It has all the elements that a literary ballad should contain. The language is simple and forceful, the idea have a smooth flow, and the story has nothing which may make it appear unnatural.

(6) Recapitulatory Questions

Q. 1. Relate the story of John Gilpin's Ride to Edmonton.

Ans. Consult "Summary".

Q. 2. Wherein does the beauty of the poem? Illustrate fully.

Ans. See Critical Appreciation.

5. TO MARY

(1) Introduction

The poem is addressed to Mary the wife of his friend and benefactor Rev. Morley Unwin. After the death of Rev. Morley Unwin the poet continued to live with the Unwin family. In this poem he expresses his love and sympathy for Mary Unwin in her old age. She had grown old and weak. Ill health had made her a helpless invalid, but the poet remembered that she used to be a kind hearted and virtuous woman and she prized her for what she had been in the past.

(2) Central Idea

The poet says that twenty years had passed since the death of Rev. Morley Unwin and she had declined in health and vitality since that very date. She had grown weaker and was now reduced to a mere skeleton. He had been to her a source of permanent suffering and worry.

(3) Summary

The poet addresses Mary Unwin, the wife of his friend and benefactor and says that twenty years had passed since the death of her husband and she had passed very unhappy and worried period. Her health had become weak and she was now reduced to a mere skeleton though her body had become weak yet her desire to help and serve others was the same as it was before. Time had turned her auburn hair into white ; but the feeling of love and pity in her mind were as strong as before and old age had not chilled her feelings.

(4) Paraphrase

St. 1. Nearly twenty years have passed since the tragedy of the death of Rev. Morley Unwin befell them and since that day their lives overcast with sorrow and he wished that the present year may be the last year of their sufferings.

St. 2. Her vitality was daily decreasing and every day she was growing more and more weak and she had suffered on his account and had grown weak.

St, 3. Her knitting needles were at one time bright with use and for his sake she constantly worked with these. Now these were used no longer and had grown rusty.

St. 4. Though she would willingly have done the same work for him, but her eye-sight being impaired she was not capable of doing so.

St. 5. She played the part of a house wife well and on account of her virtuous habits he loved her and respected her.

St. 6. On account of old age she was not able to express her ideas clearly ; but whatever may be the theme she understood them perfectly.

St. 7. Her hair were at one time of auburn colour, now these had turned grey with old age but these appeared beautiful to him like the rays of the sun in the east.

St. 8. If ever he failed to see her with her white hair he would lose all interest in life and the rising of the sun would be of no use for him.

St. 9. She has been declining and her physical strength was becoming reduced and her hands too had grown weaker, but out of love they still pressed his hands with love.

St. 10. The pressure of her hand made him conscious of the value of her person and having her as a friend he felt richer than a miser felt over his hoard of wealth.

St. 11. She had grown so weak that she could not move about by herself and had to be supported by two persons to keep her on her feet, but in spite of growing weak she was capable of loving.

St. 12. She loved still, though she was pressed down by suffering and this love helped her to escape the hold of old age and to him she appeared loveable.

St. 13. The poet says that he knew very well that she was vigilantly watchful about him and when he looked sad her smiling face became sad and sorrowful.

St. 14. He further says that if his future life were to be like his past life her worn out heart would fail on noticing his sorrows and suffering.

(5) Notes and Explanations

Stanzas 1—6—Nigh—nearly. **Overcast**—when sorrow befell them with the death of Rev. Morley Unwin. **Fainter**—weaker. **Distress**—sorrow and suffering. **Needles**—knitting needles. **Shining**—bright with use. **Fulfil**—do. **Kind office**—some work out of kindness. **The sight now seconds not thy will**—she was keen on doing something for him. But she was blind and could not do so. **The threads**—the threads of love and regard for her. **Magicart**—the charm of love. **Wound**—wrap round. **Indistinct**—not quite clear. **Theme**—subject.

Stanzas 7—14. Locks—locks of the hair. **Auburn**—light and brown. **View**—see. **Worth-seeing**—desirable. **Partakers**—sharers, **Decline**—growing old and weak. **Resign**—give up. **Richer store**—something more valuable. **Fancy**—imagine. **Feebleness**—weakness. **Limbs**—body. **Upheld**—supported. **Still to love**—continue loving. **Pressed**—afflicted. **Wintry age**—old age. **Constant**—never failing. **Care**—attention. **Oft**—often. **Transform**—change. **Be cast**—be of the same type. **Resemblance**—similarity.

(6) Critical Appreciation.

(See Introduction and Central Idea)

KEY QUESTIONS

Q. 1. What service did Cowper render to English poetry ? What is its character charm ?

Ans : Cowper is the connecting link between the classical school of Pope and the natural school of Burns, Crabbe, and Wordsworth. In addition to his reputation as a poet, Cowper is about the very best of English letter writers. In his poems as well as in his letters we come across truthfulness and thorough sincerity. As Professor Hales puts it, "in an age of poetic conventionality, of shallow theories, of soulless practice, it was Cowper that inspired our poetry with a higher and noble tone." Stopford Brooke sings the same note saying "Cowper is the first of the poets who loves Nature entirely for her own sake, and in him the idea of mankind as a whole is fully formed." Macaulay says, "Religion was the nurse of the Cowper." In fact it was the religious nature of his poetry that brought him reputation. There is an intimate connection between Cowper's religion and his peetry. His view of life in nature was coloured by his sense of sin and misery, and thus he could bring back the sense of mystery and marvel in Nature. This religious thought is the mainspring of Cowper's poetic quality. He is never gloomy in his poem, but the influence of religion is seen in his tranquil state of mind and his love for common and ordinary objects—for the simple pleasures of the fireside and a restful country life. Without this love for Nature and tranquility, he could never have occupied the high place he now holds in the realm of English poetry. His lyric poetry is not of the highest type, but in all his work there is *good taste*. Everything he wrote is simple and is based on natural feelings, natural good taste, and religious enthusiasm. As a commentator points out, the result of this was "a delicate fragile form of verse which has the new gist of looking straight at things without first putting on the spectacle of philosophy." In *Table Talk*, he lays down that there is no justification for art in poetry except that which ministers to religion and virtue. Hence his poetry is imbued

with a strong personal note and is fundamentally based on his personal observations and impressions. He himself declares in *the Task*, "my descriptions are all from Nature—not one of them second-handed." The outstanding charateristic of his Nature-poetry is in fact a personal and direct treatment. As a poet of man, although his judgment is frequently vitiated by his morbid theology he expounds a very healthy philosophy. One of the persistent feature of his poetry is his fine humanitarianism. Here he resembles Burns; who also has a tender feeling for even the humblest form of sentient life.

Q. 2. Some of the poets inculded in the *Ethernal Theme*, **point out the shortness of life. Comment on the poem of this category.**

Ans. Human life is proverbially short and no reliance can be placed on the worldly existence. When death comes man feels that he has passed a very short span of time on this earth. Some of the poets have expressed the idea of short-lived nature of life in a beautiful manner. William Cowper has a similar theme in his poem *The Poplar Field*. He reflects on his past as against the association of a field of poplar trees which has been cut down. This physical change reminds him of the frailty of human existence and human pleasure :—

> The change both my heart and my fancy employs,
> I reflect on the frailty of men and his joys ;
> Short lived as we are, our pleasure, we see,
> Have a still shorter date, and die sooner than we.

(See also "Introduction" to the Poet).

ALEXANDER POPE (1688—1744).

(1) Life and Work

(1) Alexander Pope, the English poet, was born in London in 1688. The early years of his life are shrouded in obscurity. All that we know is that he was of Roman Catholic parentage, and received a desultary education at various Roman Catholic Schools. Practically speaking, he was self-educated, and aquaint himself with Latin and Greek. In 1704, his verses drew the attention of Wyeherley, the well-known dramatist, who introduced him to other men of letters. His *Essay on Criticism* published in 1711 was even praised by Addison. The publication of *Rape of the Lock* in 1714 made his reputation as a poet, and thereafter throughout his life he met with brilliant success. With untiring energy, he went on writing until his death. In 1715, the translation of the *Iliad* was begun, the work having been finished in 1720. The book had an enormous popularity and brought £5,000 to the author. It was followed by the translation of the *Odyssey* which also became highly popular and placed him in a position of independence. In 1718, his father having died, he removed with his mother to his famous villa at Twickengham, "the adornment of the grounds of which became one of his chief interests and where, now the acknowledge chief of his art, he received the visit of his friends who included the most distinguished men of letters, wits, statesmen and beauties of the day." *The Miscellanies*, the joint work of Pope and Swift published in 1728, drew upon the authors a storm of adverse criticism which made Pope write his formidable satire the *Dunciad*. In this book he satirised the poetasters of the day with a keen, biting, and savage wit. Between 1731 and 1735, he produced his famous *Epistles*, the last of which addressed to Dr. Arbuthnot contains his ungrateful character of Addison under the name of 'Atticus'. His last important work was *Imitations of Horace*. With a delicate constitution, a deformed body, and extremely sensitive nature and overwork he could not have a long life and died at the age of fifty-six in 1744.

(2) *Critical Note.*—Pope is bracketed equal with Dryden by his contemporaries, but he retains a higher place in the affectionate esteem of posterity. His position as a poet has been the subject of much contention among critics, because he did not have the higher poetic qualities of imagination, insight, and pathos. In order to understand Pope rightly, we must remember that he wrote for his own age and he was able to interpret his age exactly in his intellectual and spiritual outlook.

(3) *The Age of Pope.*—The classical spirit was the predominant note alike in verse and prose in the literary period inaugurated by Dryden. In fact at the very portals of the Augustan age of English literature, we find the giant figure of Dryden, and at the end of this period we come across another giant intellect in Pope. It was an age of literary cliques of great patrons of genius. The tendency of the age was matter-of-factness. In the literature of the period we do not come across with ideas, but with men and things, and above all politics. Far above all other poets of this epoch, shines the name of Pope, and hence this age may be associated with his name.

(4) *Dryden and Pope.*—Both Dryden and Pope belong to the same age and as satirists as well as poets there is much in common between them. In painting portraits, Dryden alone is the rival of Pope, while in the *Rape of the Lock* he excels Dryden in the use of the Heroic Couplet which he brought to the highest technical perfection of which it is capable. As satirist, Pope's *Dunciad* contains the faults and merits of Dryden's *MacFlecknoe*, but the *Dunciad* is the fiercest of all literary satires. Dryden was the model of Pope and Pope's highest excellence also lies in sketching characters. But his style as a portrait-painter was very different from Dryden's. Again, as one who used the Heroic Couplet he overshadows even the genius of Dryden. It is easy to laugh at the rhythmic regularity of the Heroic Couplet and to make it appear trivial by reading in a sing-song manner. But if we can tune our ear properly to the movement of the verse, and to the particular emphasis

of the poet, we shall drive the full pleasure of reading the heroic couplet. In fact Pope is polished poet and as such occupies a higher place than Dryden.

(5) *Pope as satirist.*—Pope is a master of literary craft. He gave such a finishing touch to the heroic couplet that it became the most suitable vehicle for reproducing the picture of contemporary social life from the satirist's point of view. Pope became a satirist out of necessity in order to defend himself and assail his enemies. The essence of satire lies in combining jest with earnestness. This Pope did by imitating the satiric mode of Juvenile as well as of Horace. The stinging crispness of the Heroic Couplet made it the literary vehicle of carrying so much venom. And for his venom, there is some excuse in as much as his life was a long disease. Pope generally did not possess the political insight to see the merits of administration specially when enemies were concerned. Naturally he valued the friendships of those who had no public virtue and reviled those who had some acumen for administration. He was very skilful in hitting the weak points of his enemies, but "his portraits would have been more effective satires if he had made virtue a foil to vice." In order to appreciate Pope's satire, we must intimately know his life and personality. The verdict of modern critics about him is that he is one of the heroic figures in English poetry and that he is one of our greatest poets supremely competent in the technique of his art, with a brilliant and comprehending mind and a heart which could respond to Nature and humanity.

1. *From* AN ESSAY ON CRITICISM

(1) Introduction

Pope was a student of literary theory and often discussed with his friends problems of composition and criticism. The poem is an attempt to reduce these ideas to a codified statement.

(1) *Outline of the poem* .—Structurally it is divided into three main parts. The first presents the general rules of criticism and of composition ; the second indicates the dangers that beset the way of the good critic, the third defines the positive qualities of a good critic.

(2) *The Basic Ideas of the Poem* :—It is impossible for us who live in the later ages of the world to make observations in criticism and morality which have not been touched on by others. Great things cannot have escaped former observation. It is our duty therefore to school ourselves to humility in the presence of corporate human experience, as expressed in tradition and the best that has been said and thought in the world. Abiding experience is Protean in its assumption of new forms; and art and criticism should both properly be occupied in pursuing reality through its manifold appearances. And in both there is the never-ending quest for the *mot Juste*, for the perfect expression. The humanistic conception of culture which Pope most decidedly held, is that it constitutes a continuum. His philosophy can be summed up in the phrase : *follow nature*. The 'natural' in the microcosm is that which exhibits law and order ; it is the rational. A natural person is one "dont tous les mouvement sont regles, quiest vrai et judicieuse, qui parle et agit selon la verite et la raison." To live conformably to nature "n'est pas s'abandonner a tous ses mouvements a tous ses instincts : c'est suivre la raison." In other words, to follow nature was not to abandon yourself to your instincts but to subordinate yourself to the commands of the one thing which was the same in all men—the Reason. The term nature which is used so many time in the Essay on Criticism, bears in almost all cases this sense of a regular and ordered world, with the emphasis commonly on human nature, the microcosm.

(2) Summary

(The poem is divided into three parts. The first part gives the general rules about criticism ; the second shows the defects of a bad critic, and the last presents the positive qualities which a good critic must possess).

A critic must possess greater talents than the writer for judging his work. He should be gifted with the sense of true judgment, because a critic lacking this quality is apt to involve himself in serious trouble. In the field of criticism a half-read person with improper grounding will only exhaust the patience of his readers without getting any credit for what he has written. A true critic must, therefore, possess great learning, taste and intelligence. He must further stick to his special field and acquire mastery therein instead of having an idle ambition to master every subject.

To pass a correct judgment, he must follow the well-tried and well-set principles of the corporate human nature devised by the ancients. Thus nature should always be his best guide. This he should apply to his intelligence and then form a correct judgment. He should next try to catch the spirit of the writer whose work he is judging. He should ignore small details in the work and base his criticism on the general trend of the writer's thoughts. He must not have any absurd ideal notions about any work. He should rather try to examine each work in the light of the writer's point of view, and if in spite of some little flaws here and there, the work shows a systematic treatment and correct line of thought, he should give due praise to the writer. As a cultured and intelligent person, he should always avoid big mistakes by committing very little in writing or in talk. He should never be whimsical about the irrelevant and petty things which do not much concern the subject under examination. Lastly he must always keep in view the main principles which govern a particular subject, and having thus satisfied himself in a writing, he should be hearty in its approbation.

(3) Paraphrase

Lines 1—8. It is difficult to say which one of the two arts—writing poetry, and its criticism—has shown a greater lack of talents among its exponents. But taking the want of talents to be an offence, it is safer to exhaust our energies in the art of writing than to mislead our thoughts by faulty criticism, yet in reality there are few who err towards the side of writing as compared to those who fall into the pit of defective criticism. Their proportion may well be like one bad writer as compared to ten bad critics. Thus you will hardly find a foolish poet, but will, on the contrary, meet scores of foolish critics.

Lines 9—25. Although if we look closely, we shall find that most of them have been gifted with the essence of true judgment in the form of a faint light descending upon their minds. But just as a faintly sketched picture is spoiled by bad colouring,similarly their sense of judgment is spoiled by wrong studies. The result is that some get muddled with the different systems of opinions, while others take Nature as something floppish which meant to produce fools in the world. Thus such muddle-headed or under-estimating fools lose their commonsense in search of intelligence, and therefore waste much time in defending their own convictions. This necessarily involved them further in serious rivalries and jealousies with people of their trade, false or true. These fools, besides, have a desire to tease others and imagine that such criticism of theirs would add to the pleasure of the readers. Thus there are, in this world, critics worse than the evil genius that wrote in hatred against the God of light and prophecy.

Lines 26—45. To make your judgment without any possibility of error, you must first of all follow the well tried and infallible principles of corporate human nature devised by the ancients. It is because the principles which have thus been so haloed by the heavenly light, are always correct (unerring), precise, and are a source of constant guidance to the world. They afford the true appreciation of all things giving life, power and beauty to them. Thus, nature is the best judge of all acts, because

their beginning as well as end both depend on it. From this source the art (of writing), gets the necessary stimulous without encumbrance. This guiding spirit, further gives the spirit an incentive necessary for the advancement of humanity as well as checks and guides their actions.

This spirit is not visible though, yet it can be judged by its effect upon the human mind. For example, you will find that there are people gifted with much intelligence, yet they need something more than that to benefit by it, because howsoever intelligent a person might be, he must be blessed with guiding spirit to make use of his ability. It because 'intelligence' and 'judgment' are inter-dependent like man and woman and one without the other is not possible. Yet both 'intelligence' and 'judgment' are also against each other, for an intelligent person will never be quick and hasty in his judgment, and he will think twice before giving his judgment. Thus intelligence controls rather than excites the imagination of a writer and the best test of intelligence is an affective control over one's emotions. It is like a good horse whose worth is known only when you try to stop him after he is urged to run at top-speed.

Lines 46—63 A critic should observe the rules of nature (which are but a systematic arrangement of the corporate human nature) based on ancient workers of genius. Nature in the microcosm is that which, like the spirit of liberty, exhibits law and order observed from its very beginning in human reason. A critic should next be careful about 'pride' which is the unavoidable defect among fools and the strongest element to prejudice a weak-minded person. This is the greatest cause which misguides a normal man's mind and blinds him from correct judgment. Nature provides plenty of pride in a human being where it denies real virtue; it fills in the vacant mind just as a body without blood is swelled up with empty wind. Thus, where intelligence falls, pride comes up to one's aid and fills in the vacuum created in the mind by the loss of wisdom. But if once the correct judgment

dispells this mist of 'pride' from our mind, then Truth dawns upon us with the vigour of a bright day; and for this end one should not trust his own intelligence. He should rather utilize every friend or foe's comments and rectify his defects.

Lines 64—81. Shallow knowledge makes one snobbish. Such a person is like an empty vessel which sounds much; while one with deep knowledge is satiated and sober, and may be compared to a vessel filled to the brim having no room for creating an empty sound. Usually the knowledge as introduced by the teacher creates an impulse in a youth to pursue it. But our limited range of mind takes a brief view of its extensive scope, which as we advance in our studies, its vastness begins to dawn upon us. So, though with great pleasure we embark upon our pursuit of knowledge where at first the difficulties appear so trivial to the extent that our goal looks quite within sight. But gradually whatever we achieve appears so meagre as compared to the task ahead that we stagger at its extensive dimensions and the increasing difficulties in our path.

Lines 82—92. A lot of critics who are ignorant of the real method of criticism lay more importance to the rhythm, without knowing the merits and demerits of a piece of literature or poetry. Though there are many charms in a piece of literature but they are often ignored by a bad critics except the tune of the song, which is pleaseable to the ear but not the mind. His judgment is equal to the priest who pays more attention towards the church's decoration or its repairs, rather than to instil the true doctrine to his audience and except offering them the good music. Only small pieces are required though often they lost their charm even to the ear. While completing their songs in single line ten unvalued words are packed without any reason.

Lines 93—106. Then they play the same unvaluated tune again on the same rhymes without any sufficient weight. In this vuglar poetry which is well praised by

the critic is only the description of objects such as the breeze blowing, clapping of trees and sweet murmuring of the streams.

For this meaningless poetry the readers are assured that description of certain objects are the real source of thought as in this way the Alexandrine ends the song. This kind of poetry is like the wounded snake that pulls its slow length along. We should leave such kind of poetry on its dull rhymes and real value of poetry should be appreciated which is full of strength and thoughts where Dunham's strength and Walter's sweetness are combined.

Lines 107—120. Pope says that perfection in writing comes from practice and not by chance. Those people walk gracefully as are adept in the art of dancing. For a poet it is not enough that there is no jarring note in his verses, he should make an effort to combine soul with sense. The gently blowing wind had a tender effect and the gently flowing stream flows more gently than before. When the violent waves of ocean come and strike against the shore and produce a loud sound, verses which describe such a scene, they too must sound loud and rough. When a poem describes the scene in which Ajex tries to throw down some rock then the verses too must appear to labour hard and toil. Any poem which describes the scene of Comilla, the fleet floated, goddess running over the plains, the march of verses and the words used should agree with the subject matter. The different songs of Timotheus when they form the subject matter of some verses then tone must be passionate and strong.

Lines 121—128. On every turn the son of Libyan Joke, who was very furious and agree, with the spell music find in himself the feelings of love his fury eyes at once melt with burning passion of love He began to sigh without his will, and his fierce eyes now were filled with tears. He began to realise the value of music like that of Persians and Greeks. The power of music always attracts the hearts of all ages and of all times. The strength of music which was once found in Timotheus, now the same is found in Dryden.

(4) Notes & Explanations

Lines 1—8. *Criticism*—the art of judging in literature. *Writing* - the writing of poetry. *Judging ill*—finding fault with the work of others. *Of the two* of writing and criticising. **Explanation.** *To tire...sense*—to exhaust our patience by writing verses (which is a patient art) *Same few......in this*—very few make a mistake in writing as compared to those who do so in the matter of criticism. *The censure.. writes amiss* - if there is one person who writes faulty poetry, you will find ten persons who are wrong in their judgment.

Lines 9—25 *Nature glimmering......light*—Nature has gifted most of us with the essence of true judgment in the form of a faint light in our mind. *The lines...sense defaced.* **Explanation.** This faint light is the essence of true judgment in a human mind but just as a faintly sketched picture is spoiled by bad colouring, similarly this sense of judgment is spoiled by improper studies. *Some are...... maze of schools* - some get muddled up with the various systems of opinions. *And some......but fools.*—while others think Nature to be something vain meant to produce a world of fools. *Coxcomb Nature*—foolish Nature. *In search of wit... own defence*—underestimating fools lose their commonsense in search of intelligence and therefore have to waste much time in defending their own conviction. *Each.........spite*—this necessarily involves them in serious rivalries and jealousies with other people of his trade, false or true. *Eunuch's spite* - lasting illwill. It was very dangerous to earn his ill-will. *An itching to deride* - a teasing desire. *Fain*—imagine. *Apollo*—god of light, a patron of music, poetry. As god of music he was attended by Muses. *If Maevius......Apollo's spirit* - if evil genius could write in grudge against Apollo. *There are......write*—there are in this world critics worse than the evil genius that hated even the god of light and prophecy.

Lines 26 - 45. *Follow Nature*—Pope's philosophy is summed up in this brief phrase. 'Follow Nature', which means that one should follow what is *rational.* This doctrine, according to Cazamian, "is not cast, as it were, at

one stroke, the thought of Pope, while sharp and clear, is never really synthetic ; it is often fragmentary. Thus, one can find in Pope something of the spirit of the moderns ; in a less precise manner than Dryden. *First follow Nature...still the same*. **Explanation**:-To frame your judgments (as a well-taught and well-informed judge) you must follow the infallible and well-tried principles of the corporate human nature. *Divinely bright*—haloed by the heavenly light. *At once...... test of Art*—the corporate human nature is the best judge of all acts. *Fund*—source. *Informing soul*—the guiding spirit. *Each motion......never sustains*—controls and guides every action. *Some...been profuse*—there are some who are gifted with abundant intelligence. *Want...to its use*—howsoever intelligent, a person must as a rule possess a guiding spirit within him to make use of his ability. *For wit...man and wife*—intelligence and judgment are interdependent, because one without the other is not possible. *This more to guide speed*—thus intelligence controls rather than excites the imagination of a writer. *Winged courser*—the flight of imagination. *The winged...his course*—the best test of intelligence is control over one's emotions like a good horse whose worth is known only when you try to check him after making him run.

Lines 46—63. *The Rules of old discovered, not devised... methodized*—with the doctrine of 'Follow Nature', the poet passes from the praise of nature and of her union with art to the *rules* which a critic should observe. 'Nature methodised'. It means that these rules are just a systematic arrangement of the corporate human nature. This means 'Know well each Ancient's proper character,' we may, or rather must, reply, 'It is most necessary ; but you will neglect the Moderns at your peril'.

" In short, here as elsewhere, Pope's dazzaling elocution, winged with a distinct if narrow concepton of his general purpose, flies right enough in the inane, but makes painfully little progress when it lights on the prosaic ground. *Nature...her ordained*—Nature in the corporate human nature is that which exhibits law and order. *Of all the Causes...Vice of fools*—'pride', which the unavoidable defect in fools. *What ever...pride*—Nature gives plenty of pride

where it denies real virtue. *Pride where wit...of sense*—(Thus) where intelligence falls, pride comes to one's aid and fills in the vacuum created in the mind by the loss of widsom. *Right reason*—correct intelligence. *Drives that could away*—dispells that mist of 'pride' from our mind. *Truth...resistless day*—Truth dawns upon us with the vigour of a bright day. *Trust not...every foe*—to avoid this mist of pride, one should not trust his intelligence.

Lines 64—81. *A little learning...sobers us again*—The poet means to say that shallow knowledge makes one proud and snobbish like a vessel that sounds much with little water. On the contrary, a person with deep knowledge is satiated and sober, and may be compared to a vessel which is filled to the brim with water. *Pierian spring* - Spring of knowledge. Pieria, region of ancient Macedonia ; it included Mount Olympus and Mount Pierus who are sometimes called the Pierides. *Tempt*—attempt. *Bounded level*—limited range. *New distant scenes......of endless science rise* ! The deeper you go in your studies, the vaster become the limits of knowledge, until you reach a stage where even its limits are lost to the human conception. *Towering Alps we try*—that we shall try to master knowledge. *Mount over......sky*—by facing all difficulties which one may have in its attainment. *The eternal snow ;......Alps on Alps arise*—but in the pursuit of knowledge while at first the difficulties appear little and insignificant to the extent that our goal looks just within sight (the first clouds and mountains seem the last) ; but gradually whatever we achieve appear so meagre as compared to what remains to be mastered that we stagger at its vastness and the increasing difficulties in our path.'

Lines 82—106. *Who haunt:*—that come frequently, here it means the repeating words that come in a line of verse may appeal to our ear but not to mind. *Parnassus* :—poetry or literature. *Vowel*—a sound able to make syllable. Musical words which create sound in poetry. *Tire*—weary, the words that are often used in a piece of poetry or literature lost their charm. *Expletives*—serving to fill out or complete the hopeless efforts by a poet to complete a line of

poetry by using meaningless words. *Unvaried*—unvalued words which corrupt the true literature. *Couplet*—pair of something, here it means two lines of verses that rhyme with each other. *Frought*—load, burden, here it means the bad critics as well as the bad poets or writers use heavy words that are uncomprehensible by ordinary readers and foolishly consider it the true art of literature. *Languishly*—to become dull. *Vigour*—strength of mind or energy, here Pope means to say that we should appreciate the energetic poetry which is full with sourceful meanings.

Lines 107—128. *True ease*—real flow and harmony. *From art*-by practice and by following set rules and principles. *Not chance*—such perfection is not attained by sheer chance. (The reader must bear in mind that Pope is the apostle of the classical school of thought. These poets believed in rigid rules and laws by practising which perfection could be attained. These were narrow-minded people and strict adherence to rules on their part made their poetry narrow as well as cramped. Poet says that verses should follow the tone and mood of the subject-matter). *As those move easiest*—and those people have greatest grace of movement when they walk. *Who have learned to dance*—people who are well versed in the art of dancing walk with great ease and elegance. '*Tis not enough*—it is not sufficient from the point of view of good poetry. *Tis not...offence*—Pope advises his fellow poets that in writing verses they should try to attain full perfection both of style and thought and both should be well co-ordinated. Real perfection is attained by practice and not by mere chance. The style and language must be perfect and exquisite and language and style must follow the pattern and style of thought. If anyone succeeds in writing verses which are not rugged and rough and in which there is a rythm and harmony, but words and form fail to correspond with thought he cannot claim to be a good poet. *Must seem...sense*—words used in the poem must be in accordance with the ideas expressed therein. *Soft*—gentle and tender. *Strain*—tenor *Soft is...gently blows*—the language and tenor of verses should be gentle and smooth when it is giving description of gently blowing morning breeze. *And the...numbers*

flows—if and when the poet indulges in description of some gently flowing river he must use such language and should form his verses in such a style that he should be able to create an atmosphere of smoothness and gentle flow. Thus in his verses the gentle flowing of the river would appear more gentle and smoother than it actually is. *Surges*—waves of the ocean. *Loud surges*—waves of the ocean which make a loud noise. *Torrent*—violent and turbulent water of the ocean. *The hoarse...torrent roar*—if the poem describes some scene in which the waves of the ocean rise high and strike against the shore producing a loud noise then the poet must use such language and matter that his verse becomes rough and rugged and convey to the reader the rough sound of a torrent. *Ajax*—a Greek hero mentioned by Homer in his *Iliad*. *Labours*—appears to move with great effort. *And the woods move slow*—a poem which is written about Ajax and he is shown in the hard labour of raising big and heavy rocks then an effort should be made to write verses in such manner and such style and words should be used which might convey to the reader a sense of laborious work and slow movement. *Not so*—but the same ruggedness and slowness of movement would be quite out of place when a gentle and mild situation is described. *Camilla*—The huntress and maiden warrior mentioned in the Aeneid, a famous epic poem written by Virgil *Scores the plain*—she runs over plains. *Unbending corn*—she runs so fast and her flight is so nimble that grain crops over which she passes do not bend even. *Main*—ocean. (Pope says verses written about Camilla should go fast and glidingly conveying to the reader the same nimble touch and fleet footedness which Camilla had). *Hear how...fall in drise*—Pope gives his readers as well as the new rising poets a model which they are told to study and follow. He says Timotheus the well known Greek poet and musician was one who always set the pattern and style of his verses according to the subject he happened to be writing about. He varied the rythm of his poems in accordance with the needs of the subject. Sometimes he made it rise and sometimes he made it fall. *Fierce*—violent, angry look of Libyan's son. *Fury*—rage. *Steal*—here it means to heave sighs secretly.

2. THE RAPE OF THE LOCK

(1) Introduction

The word 'rape' means carrying off by force. The lock of Belinda's hair was forcefully cut off and taken away by the Baron That was the Rape of the Lock. This is a long poem containing five cantos, but in our textbook there is only third canto that covers the course. The poem is based on a trifling incident picked up from real life. Lord Petre was well known for his amorous and frivolous nature. He loved Arabella Fermor. He offended by cutting off a lock of her hair. This trifling incident gave rise to a serious quarrel between the two families. The Peter's and the Fermor's John Caryll, a common friend of the two families gave a suggestion to Pope, with whom he was equally friendly, to write a mock heroic poem based on the rape of Belinda's lock by the Baron. Pope at once picked up this hint and composed this poem and was published in March 1714.

The Rape of the Lock is a mock-heroic poem. It seeks to present a trifling subject in the style and manner of an epic poet It is a burlesque of the epic in which Pope has used the mock heroic machinery in a very deft and clever manner The whole poem stands a little delirious thing and is recognised as the most attractive of all ludicrous composition.

(2) Substance

The poet asserts that sometimes big quarrels arise from trivial things. Belinda, which is the name given to Fermor by the poet, prepared at ten o'clock and went to the Thames surrounded by her maids. She was so beautiful that every eye was fixed on her She had two beautiful locks of hair hanging round her smooth neck, which made all the youths her captives One adventurous baron admired these locks and wished to possess this prize. He was bent on fraud or force to achieve his end of getting a lock of her hair. He earnestly prayed to goddesses, especially the goddess of Love, to give him the lock and his

prayer was half granted. In the majestic building of Hampton Court on the banks of the Thames a grand feast was being enjoyed by lords and ladies. The baron thought of a new stratagem. Clarissa gave him a pair of scissors. He approached Belinda as she was bending on a steaming cup of tea he cut the lock of her hair. She gave out heart-rending cries and shed tears. But victor was happy at his prize. She felt extremely enraged and dishonoured. She asked Sir Plume to get her hair back from the lord. Sir Plume pleaded for it but lord refused, swearing that he loved to keep that lock so long as he was alive. Then she herself pleaded cursing the moment when she came to Hampton Court. But fair Belinda's appeals did not move the Peer's heart. Then she flies at the baron with a great rage ; there was a fire in her eyes. She throw a little snuff into his nostrils and the baron violently sneezed. She threatened him with a small dagger but he fondly asked her to tell him live for the sake of her love. He began to search for the lock, but it was gone. It had risen upward to the heaven and shot up in the sky like a shooting star. The poet advises the bright fairy (Belinda) to cease mourning for it as all beautiful things will perish.

(3) Critical Summary

This mock-heroic poem was written for a purpose, which, according to the Poet himself, was achieved in the end. The dedication of the poem in the beginning is remarkable. Pope himself says, "As to the *Rape of the Lock*, I believe I have managed the dedication so nicely that it can neither hurt the lady nor the author." The author points out that sometimes very small matters lead to very grave consequences. In this case, a little act of bold love on the part of a young lord brings about a serious dispute between two families. Pope was a classicist and he weaves the web of the whole incident and its consequences on the pattern of great epics. Bright humour and satire are combined together in the poem. The story begins with the light of the sun peeping into the room of Belinda through the curtains ; the clocks strike ten in the morning and Belinda wakes. Attended by a number of girls she

goes out to the river and begins to sail along its surface while numerous young men admire her beauty. She smiled at every one and nobody could ever guess that such a gay face as hers could ever hide a furious temperament. She had grown two special ringlets of hair to adorn her white neck and to ravish the hearts of men. The poet, here, remarks that there are various types of nets used to catch birds and animals but men can be caught even by such frail things as a lock of hair. Among the gathering there was a young baron who wished to get these locks of hair and was always thinking of a way of achieving his purpose. He had most devoutly prayed to gods for an opportunity which the gods at last gave him.

The young men and beautiful ladies came to the Hampton Court where they usually gathered and discussed politics and other affairs and had a nice time. In the afternoon when the party began to take their drinks, the young baron thought of a trick and getting a pair of scissors from Clarissa he stealthily came behind Belinda and cut one of the two lovely locks. The cutting away of the lock is described by Pope as an incident of great moment with all the dignity of the Muses. Now follows an account of the consequences, of his offence. The lady loses herself in a flood of helpless grief and rage, while the baron feels proud of his grand victory and declares that his name will never die and that he has achieved immortal fame through this triumph. The poet says that even the greatest works of gods and men cannot stand against steel; no wonder, therefore, if the precious lock has yielded to the scissors.

The lady's mind was in constant unrest and her anger was increased by the ferocious Thalestris who told her how her precious lock had come to a tragic end and how the young baron would show it in all circles of society and disgrace her name everywhere, so that no respectable lady would like even to speak to her. After this, she (Thalestris) went to her lover, Sir Plume, and excited him to go to the baron and ask for the lock. He spoke to the baron and asked him, with all seriousness to return the lock to Belinda. But the young and ambitious baron proudly refused to

return it. By this time Belinda's anger and sorrow had risen to such a pitch that she could not help bursting out in an expression of helpless fury. She wished that she had never come to the Hampton Court, or remained alive to see such a day. She also mentioned certain ominous happenings of the morning which foretold this great misfortune. Here too is a touch of the mock-heroic, for it is great events which are foreshadowed by omens and extra-ordinary signs. In her desperation she asked the baron to cut away the remaining lock also. The sympathetic listeners melted in tears but the baron was intransigent and unmoved even by the rebukes of the ladies. Thalestris, at this point, gave the signal for the battle and the ladies and gentlemen divided themselves into two parties and the fight started in great earnest. The description of the fight is in the style of Homer. The atmosphere was filled with the cries and shrieks of women, the fans clashed and the silken dresses fluttered and the stiff whale bones of the petticoats cracked. The furious glances of the ladies killed many a handsome knight and the terrific rush of the battle continued for a long time without any decisive step. At last Jove hung down the balance and the side of the hair went down while that of the wits went up. The gods decided in favour of the ladies Belinda rose with a fresh vigour and attacked the baron with a pinch of snuff with the result that his eyes filled with tears and he began sneezing. Then she attacked him with a bodkin and he yielded in helplessness. When the battle ended the people looked for the hair but it was nowhere to be found and some thought that it had flown to the sphere of the moon. The poet says that the Muse saw the lock rising upward, carried by a star, till it reached heaven, and became a constellation. Therefore the lady should not be disappointed, for her hair had achieved immortal glory.

(4) Critical Appreciation

Pope's *Rape of the Lock* is a typical example of classical poetry, both in subject-matter and its style of writing. The subject-matter concerns with a love adventure of a lord and a beautiful rich lady, an attempt to seize by force and

fraud the beautiful lock of hair of an unwilling aristocratic girl. Pope raises to great importance a trivial occasion. It goes to his credit that he has created a classic out of a mere jest, or at best a revengeful action of a lover's frolic. But there are critics who look down upon this kind of selection of a subject for poetry. They hold that it is not a fit subject for the poetic Muse. They say that a lady's napkin falls, or her fan is lost, or a lock of her hair is clipped and the shallow poet runs home to write an elegy. Further, Pope is the poet of aristocratic society and his subject-matters are also concerned with the love affairs of the aristocracy. There is hardly any vein of human sympathy for the lower classes to be found in this poem, nor does it touch the fringe of the problems that concern with the lives of the lower classes.

Unlike the romantic poet Pope is not interested in the beauties of Nature. The nature of his subject also excludes this. There are only passing references here and there, but they are no more than mere passing references, for example the beauty of the starry skies, etc. As regards style, the poem shows the heroic couplet with all its merits and demerits. Pope is a master of the heroic couplet and can manage his form with great force and strength. But at the same time every reader must be struck with the mechanical woodenness of the heroie couplet (*i.e.* every two lines rhyming together). There is no variety in the rhyme scheme, except what little variation the poet makes in the internal parts of the line.

As one of the critics points out *The Rape of the Lock* has been recognised as a masterpiece of Pope, one of his most delightful poems and certainly the best mock-heroic poem in the English literature. The poet aimed through this poem to reconcile the two great families to which Lord Petre and Arabella Fermor belonged. Arabella is represented as the fair Belinda in the poem. It was written for a special occasion. It is a remarkably successful attempt at making Belinda and making the lock of her hair immortal, though the occasion itself was very trivial. As "society verse" it ranks with Sheridan's *School for Scandal*, written

later on. It depicts in a laughing satire the trivial doings of high society during the so-called Polite Age. Considered as a work of imagination the poem is perhaps Pope's highest achievement. It is a kind of burlesque, an imitation for the purpose of amusing the readers. It exaggerates certain things and it diminishes the value of others. For example, Belinda's anger is heightened a good deal and her running with a knife at the lord in a threatening mood is mock-heroic. Similarly, Clarissa talks like a great philosopher or wise man. There are passages where ordinary things are deseribed with the height of beauty; for instance Belinda's dressing table becomes an altar, her mirrored image becomes the goddess, and her maid the inferior priestess.

(5) Summary

The Hampton Court is situated on the bank of river Thames. It is a splendid building, rich in gardens and nature's loveliness. This palatial building owes its name to a neighbouring village called Hampton. The place was the meeting ground of kings, princes, and dukes. Here were arranged cabinet meetings as well as tea parties.

Gallant youngmen and beautiful ladies gathered at the Hampton Court to enjoy the pleasure of court life and discuss as variety of topics such as the magnificence of Queen Anne's court, the role of visitors, and the beauty of India's painted screens.

Belinda was engaged with two gallant youngmen at a game of Ombre, and it was her desire to defeat both of them single-handed in this card game. The game of Ombre is a very interesting card game, and at the end of the play Belinda scored a triumph over her rivals. She was extremely delighted and shouted loudly with joy. The walls, the woods, the canals reverberated with her joyous shouts.

Human beings are by nature so constituted that they feel elated at trifling gains and depressed at paltry losses. They are fools. Belinda was no exception. She was feeling very happy at her victory in the game of cards

without realising that the day of victory would prove the day of disaster for her, and she would curse the day that made her triumphant in the game of Ombre.

After the game of Ombre was over, cups and spoons were laid on the table. The tables were tastefully decorated. Coffee was served to the assembled guests, including lords, lovers and lasses, and all of them enjoyed steaming cups of coffee. There was an air of jollity and light-heartedness at the Hampton Court, aad all the participants had forgotten the sense of time. The rich entertainment lasted for a pretty long time. Belinda enjoyed the cup of coffee, and the Baron also felt happy after taking a cup of hot coffee. The fumes of coffee went to the Baron's head and in a state of exalted inspiration he thought of novel methods of possessing Belinda's lock of hair. The Baron was bent upon committing mischief and he was unmindful of the dire consequence that might follow his action.

The Baron thought of cutting Belinda's lock of hair and Clarissa, another lady present on the scene, offered the Baron a pair of scissors. The Baron accepted the offer and as soon as Belinda bent over her cup of sweet-swelling coffee he opened the scissors and got ready to clip a lock of hair A thousand spirits rushed to the help of Belinda and by fluttering their wings in the air they kept the lock waving in the air. It was safe from the Baron's scissors They also pricked the ear-rings, and warned her of the impending calamity. Belinda, however, paid no heed to the warning of the spirits.

Exactly at the same moment, Ariel took his seat on the bunch of flowers lying on Belinda's breast He was anxious to know the feelings of love that might be surging in her heart Though Belinda tried to hide her feelings, yet Ariel could see that the figures of some human lover was hiding in her heart She was entertaining feelings of love for some lover in her heart. Ariel at once decided not to protect her for she was not chaste. At least in her thought she was harbouring the thought of a lover. Ariel,

therefore, withdrew from his place of duty and left her to her fate. Belinda was left unprotected to face the assault of the Baron.

The Baron opened wide the pair of scissors to cut a lock of Belinda's hair. A sylph came in way and was divided into two parts, but being a spirit it was again united. The Baron successfully cut the lock of Belinda's hair. When Belinda became conscious of the rape of her lock by the Baron she grew furious and her cheeks flushed with indignation. Her loud shrieks of horror filled terror in the hearts of gods and angels Belinda's despair was ineffable. She felt extremely miserable and wretched.

The Baron felt exulted at his success, and pointed out to Belinda that he was proud of owning the lock of her hair. Steel had the capacity of destroying even the works of the gods. There was little wonder if her lock of hair had yielded to the pair of scissors made of steel. She should not feel sorry for her lock, for he would preserve it and feel honoured by its possession. She should reconcile herself to whatever had happened and should not burn with indignation at the inevitable happening.

(6) A brief analysis of the poem

Lines 1—8. The Hampton Court is situated on the bank of river Thames. The palatial building of Hampton derives its name from the neighbouring village called Hampton. It is the place where Britain's statesmen assemble to discuss serious matters. Sometimes cabinet meetings and tea parties are organised at Hampton Court.

Lines 9—18. Here at the Hampton Court a number of gallant young men and beautiful ladies assemble to waste their time in idle gossip and in discussing such things as the glory of the British queen or the beauty of Indian screens.

Lines 19—36. Time passed very quickly till every body felt the urge for dinner. Judges and the jury-men hurriedly decided cases of the wretched prisoners. The

merchants also returned for dinner from the royal exchange. At such a time Belinda thought of playing the game of Ombre, a card game, with two adventurous knights. As soon as Belinda thought of the game, the sylphs came down and took their seats on the cards in her hand.

Lines 37—44. The cards consisted of four kinds, four queens, four knaves and number of cards of the lower order.

Lines 45—100. The game of Ombre was played out in full and at the end Belinda was declared victorious over the Baron and his companions. Belinda was puffed up with pride and shouted loudly with joy. The walls. the woods, the canals echoed back her shouts of joy.

Lines 101—104. Human beings are foolish and thoughtless. They are easily dejected at trifling losses and elated at temporary gains. They do not know that such honours are soon taken away. Belinda did not know that the day of her victory over the Baron would prove an ominous day for her.

Lines 105—112. In honour of the victory a gay party was arranged. Cups and spoons were laid on the tables. The silver lamp presented a shining appearance and when the inflammable oil in the lamp was burnt, it emitted a bright light. Coffee was served in cups and everybody enjoyed hot and sweet-scented coffee. This rich entertainment lasted for a considerable time.

Lines 113—124. The sylphs spread out their wings to protect Belinda from all harm. The sylphs spread out their wings to protect Belinda's gown from being spoiled by coffee. Coffee has strange power. It makes politicians wiser. In this party the fumes of coffee reached the Baron's head and under the inspiration of coffee he devised methods of possessing Belinda's bright lock of hair. The Baron was unconscious of the fact that wrong-doers were sure to be punished by gods.

Lines 125—154. The Baron was bent upon committing a mischief. His main purpose was to cut a lock of Belinda's hair. No sooner he thought of the evil purpose, than Clarissa, another lady, offered him a pair of scissors. The Baron accepted it and opened it to cut off a lock of Belinda's hair. Spirits came to the help of Belinda and warned her of the impending calamity by pulling her diamond earings and by waving her lock in the air. The Baron, however, was bent upon committing the mischief. At the same moment Ariel sat on the bunch of flowers lying on Belinda's breast and noticed that she was not chaste for she was harbouring thought of a lover in the innermost recesses of her heart. Ariel decided not to protect her for she was unchaste, even though in thought. He reluctantly withdrew from the place of his duty and left Belinda to her fate. The Baron cut off the lock of hair. A sylph was cut into two when she came in between but was soon joined back because airy substances are united in no time.

Lines 155—160. Belinda was filled with great horror and anger when she found that the Baron had cut off a lock of her hair. The scream of horror raised by Belinda rent the sky.

(7) Notes and words meaning

Lines 1—18. *For ever crown'd with flower's* : Decked with flowers that bloom in all seasons. *Fall*: Overthrow. *Foredoom* : Predict. *Foriegn tyrants*: Despotic rulers of foriegn countries. *Nymphs at home*: Beautiful ladies of England itself. *Anna* : Queen Anna. *Three realms obey* : Rules over the territories of England, Scotland and Ireland. Tea : Pronounced as 'tay' to rhyme with the above line. *Resort* : Foregather. *Paid the visit last* : One last visitor to the Hampton Court. *Reputation dies* : Some one is defamed. *Snuff* : Pulvarised tobacco. *Pause* : Interval. *Oghing* : Giving amorous glances.

Lines 19—36. *Declining* : Turning away. *Obliquely* : Slantingly. *Shoots* : Sends down. *Hungry judges* : Because the dinner hour which was four o'clock for person

of status, was drawing near. *Sentence signe* : Sign and deliver judgment. *Wretches hang* : The accused are awarded the punishment of death. *Toilet* : The process of dressing. *Whome thirst...invites* : Desire to achieve distinction allures to act. *Burns* : Experiences consuming passion. *Ombre* : A game of cards. *To decide their doom* : To defeat them. *Swells her breast* : Feels joyful. *Conquest* : Victory over their hearts and at the game. *Bands prepare in arms to join* : Sets of cards held by each player are made ready to be played. *Sacred nine* : Each set of nine cards. *Aerial guard* : The spirits. *Matadore* : Chief card among those held by a player. *Ancient race* : Early existence in the form of women. *Wondrous found of place* : Peculiarly in love with rank and position in society.

Lines 37—62. *Kings*—Kings relating to the four suits of cards. *Hoary*: white. *Forky*: like a fork. *Sustain*: hold. *Gerbs*: clothes. *Succinct* : wrapped up about their waists. *Trusty band* : Reliable group. *Halberts* : A weapon consisting of a wooden shaft. *Troops* : Ordinary cards lower in value than court words and trumps. *Velvet plain* : Surface of the gaming table covered with velvet. *Skilful nymph* : The expert (card) player, blinder : *Her force* : The cards in her hands. *Sable* : Dark skinned. *Show* : appearance. *Swarthly Moor* : Black Africans. *Spadillio* : Ace of spades. *As many more* : Two trump cards more like the ones in the first trick. *Manillio* : The two of spades, also called the deuce. *Plebeian* : Ordinary. *Sabre* : An one edged sword. *Chief a year* : A king of advanced age. *Hoary majesty* : white-haired sovereign. *Rebel* : Because appearing against his lord, the king of spades. *Pam* : The knave of clubs which is of the highest value in the game of Lu, but not so in the game of Ombre.

Lines 63—86. *Sad chance of war* : Sorrowful uncertainty of the result of war. *Destitude of aid*—Shorn of power and strength. *Unclines the field* : shows favour. *Warlike Amazon* : A woman capable of bold fighting with high courage. *Imperial consort* : Royal wife. *Crown* : The king. *Black tyrant* : Black because he belonged to the suit of clubs, and tyrant because kings are of despotic nature. *Mien* :

Bearing. *Barb' rous pride* : Indecent sense of self impatance. *What boots* : of little use. *Regal circle* : Crown. *Globe* : A ball like object which is a symbol of royalty *Apace*: In quick succession. *Embroidered* : Ornamently painted. *Who shews but half his face* : The king of diamond used to be painted with only half of his face exposed to view. *Refulgent* : shining. *With powers combined* : formations ; united force of the king and queen of diamonds. *Broken troops*. Soldiers in broken formations. *Frongs promiscuous* : confused crowds. *Strew* : Lies scattered. *Routed* : Worsted. *Habit* : clothes. *Pierced battalions* : Disorganised units of soldiers *O'er-whelms* : Weigh down.

Lines 87—111. *Oh shameful chance* : An accident full of disgrace in as much as the knave of diamonds won and captured the queen of heart. *Forsook* : Belinda was virgin. *Livid* : lead coloured. *Ruin* : threatened by defeat. *Distempered* : stake money. *Forth* : Baron place the ace of hearts. *The king* : king of hearts. *Ace* : The ace of diamonds moved by the Baron lay collapsed in the face of the king of hearts played by Belinda. *Nymph* : Echo Belinda's shout of joy. *Elate*: Get puffed up. *Crown'd* : Decorated. *Crackle* : sound. *Altars* of *Japan* : stands glistening with Japanese varnish. *Fiery Spirits* : Highly inflammable oil. *Spouts* : Projection mouths of white tea-pots. *Liquors* : Milk and coffee.

Lines 112—136 *Glide* : flow forth. *Scent* : sense of smell. *Repast* : Excellent drink. *Airy band*: Group of spirits. *Plumes* : wings *conscious of the rich brocade* : Onamented cloth of Baron *Vopours* : fumes. *Stratagems* : Tricks. *Radiant lock* : Glossy lock of hair. *Injured hair* : the lock of hair purloined by Scylla from the head of her father. *Will* : Intention. *Grace* : glory. *A two edged weapon* : A pair of scissors *Reverence* : with a bow of his head. *The little engines*: a pair of tiny scissors *Fragrant steams*. Sweet scented coffee.

Lines 137—160 *Twitched* : Tugged at. *Nosegay* : A band of flowers. *Earthly lover* : Human lover. *Expired* : fulfil *Peer* : Baron. *Forfex* : Scissors. *Fatal engine* : Devastating scissors *Fate urged the shears* : Destiny made the scissors to move. *Sacred hair* : Hair not yet kissed. *Affrighted skies* : Frightened the denizens of the heaven.

3. THE REIGN OF CHAOS

(1) Introduction

These few lines are taken from Pope's famous poem Dunciad The poet visualises the return of Chaos and how it would affect the state of things. Critically Pope looks upon the possibility of chaotic conditions returning to this world. The immediate result would be a set back to human progress and well being. Darkness would cover the whole world and the light of reason would fade utterly.

(2) Central Idea

The darkness of Chaos comes upon the world and it would soon cover under its dark fold all art and culture and progress would be lost in the rush of un-creation. All things would become buried under its curtain.

(3) Summary

Pope says that Chaos would come upon the world once again and old darkness of Chaos would spread over the world again. The beauty of glamour would die away and its place would once again be taken by darkness of ignorance. Falsehood and want of knowledge would prevail all over the world once again. Arts and science would suffer an immediate set back and anarchy would cover up the whole world.

(4) Paraphrase

Lines 1—13. Chaos is fast coming upon the world and its dark throne descending. The arrival of Chaos makes the bright clouds of imagination to disappear and all its many coloured frame work would die. The transient shoots of wit would wither and its light would die away like the shooting star which is fallen. On the ethereal plain the stars of wit and knowledge die away just as the eyes of Argus slowly closed under the effect of the wound of Hermes. Thus the arrival of Chaos makes the flames of art go out one by one.

Lines 14—24. The arrival of Chaos has made truth to skulk and it has fled to caves to hide itself and all false argument have become heaped on the heads of human beings. Philosophy, which was previously thought to be something divine, is now reduced in importance and has become shrunk in volume. Mathematics has become mystery because none studies it. In vain the gaze becomes giddy and dies. The sacred fires of religion are put to shame and die and without being noticed morality dies away.

Lines 25—30. The arrival of Chaos dimmed every thing. All over the world has spread the blackness of chaos and light died before the un-creating darkness of chaos. Anarchy has spread all over the world and now there lay a curtain of Universal darkness.

(5) Notes and Explanations

Lines 1—13. *Sable throne*—dark seats of chaos. *Behold*—see. *Primeval*—elemental chaos. *Before her*—in the presence of chaos. *Fancy*—imagination. *gilded*--bright and shining. *Decay*—go weak and die away. *Varying rainbow*—many coloured and bright creations of imagination. *Wit*—intelligence. *Shoots*—put forth. *In vain*—which become useless because decay had set in. *Momentary*—short lived. *Meteor*—shooting star. *In a flash*—after giving out a bright but expiring flame. *Dread*—fearful and dangerous. *Sickening stars*—stars that grown dim *Fade off*—grow dim and disappear. *Ethereal*—thin and rarefied. *Opprest*—troubled. *Everlasting*—permanent.

Lines 14—24. *Skulking*—angry and retiring. *Caverns fled*—had run away to their secret hiding places. *Consistry*—wrong way of reasoning and argument. *Leaned on heaven*—was directed towards heavenly ideas. *Shrinks*—contracts and become smaller than what it was before. *Gaze*—look. *Giddy*—lose proper mental balance. *Sacred*—holy. *Unawares*—not knowing.

Lines 25—30. *Public flame nor private*—public effort or private work. *Glimpse*—short view. *Divine*—holy and

sacred. *Dread empire*—The fearful authority and power of chaos and authority of chaos and anarchy. *Restored*—is once again brought back to the world.

(6) Critical Appreciation

(See Introduction).

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4. THE PROPER STUDY OF MANKIND

(1) Introduction

This piece containing 30 lines is reproduced from "*Essay on Man*".

The *Essay on Man* is the most real of all Pope's poems. It is a repository of the typical ideas of the day ; the doctrine of plentitude based on flippant and shallow optimism, the belief in a universe that is rationally constructed, the concept of order and the understanding of social benevolence. It comes very near to what true philosophical poetry can be, and at times attains to it. "With a little more warmth of soul," says Cazamian, "a little more imaginative ardour, the parts of this uneven rhapsody might have been amalgamated into one single mass; as it stands, it has its inspired passages, and its vehement tone lifts up and cheerfully carries the weight of the ideas."

According to John Drinkwater, the *Essay on Man* is the most real of Pope's poems. It gave him a European reputation, winning the warm admiration of Voltaire and others who had the ear of the civilised world. It is not, as Pope believed, a real contribution to philosophy. Modern criticism, in appraising its ethical value, steers a midway course between the extravagant compliment of Dugald Stewart, who called it 'the noblest specimen of philosophical poetry which our language affords', and the extravagant condemnation of De Quincey, who dismissed it as 'the realisation of anarchy.' It contains constantly quoted lines such as ;

An honest man's the noblest work of God,

which set forth in the fewest and most emphatic words possible thoughts which are always in men's minds. The crowd-compelling power of such ever-popular poems consists in the fact that they say in memorable phrases, with a simple, striking imagery, what the average man thinks—or thinks he thinks—about the great problems of human life, here and in the hereafter. Everybody can appreciate the familiar image in the following lines:

> Know then thyself, presume not God to scan,
>   The proper study of mankind is man.
> Plac'd on this isthmus of a middle state,
>   A being darkly wise, and rudely great:
> With too much knowledge for the sceptic side,
>   With too much weakness for the Stoic's pride,
> He hangs between : in doubt to act, or rest;
>   In doubt to deem himself a God, or beast:

"None the less it is a part of the poet's many-sided art thus to refurnish a truism into a truth, and out of a platitude create a proverbial saying. Pope's Moral Essays are full of the lines that have attained almost the currency of proverbs."

(2) Summary

The poet advises that we should not attempt to make a study of God but we should try to study Man. Man is a bundle of contradictions. He has been created as wise and great in an unducated manner. He possesses knowledge for the sake of doubts and has weakness for taking pride that he has controlled his passions He hangs between the doubt whether to act or to rest. He considers himself a god and yet he is no better than a beast. He is in doubts whether to prefer the needs of his mind or of his body. Thus there is chaos or confusion in his thought. He has been created half to rise heavenward but half to fall. He is the great lord of all things and yet he is a prey to all. He is a glorious creature and yet he is the jest (joke) and a puzzle of the world.

God has made a wonderful creature in man: he is gifted with such opposite qualities as wisdom and ignorance, greatness and vileness, qualities, and certitude and doubt that he is in a fix to understand whether he is a god or a beast. He remains thus in a state of doubt dominated at times by thoughts of greatness, yet ending in a chaos of thoughts crumbling down to sheer mess of ignorance and foolish ideas.

(3) Notes and Explanations

Lines 1—18. *Know then thyself.. ...is Man*—the poet advises all mankind not to attempt too much. They should not try to make a study of God Himself but they should study man himself. *Placed on this . ...rudely great*—Man is placed on a narrow piece of land between two big seas. He is ignorantly wise, *i.e.*, his wisdom is not enlightened and his knowledge is confined only to the low things of the world. He knows nothing of the higher things. He is great in a rough, uneducated manner. *With too......sceptic side*—All the knowledge that he possesses creates doubts in his mind against God and Faith. *With too ...stoic pride*—He has the weakness to have too much pride that he has controlled his passions. Stoics were a number of Greek philosophers whose leader was Zeno. They advocated that man should neither be moved by greatest pleasures nor upset by greatest sorrows and griefs. One should remain calm throughout. *He hangs......rest*—Man is always wavering whether he should act or sit idle. *In doubt......a beast*—he is always doubting whether he is a god or a beast. The spiritualists have been thinking that man is a part of God, or that God resides in the soul of man. But the scientists like Darwin think that man has evolved out of the lower animals. There is an apt verse of an Urdu poet *Akbar Allahabadi*:

منصور نے کہا خداھوں میں ـ ڈارون بولا بوزنہ هوں میں
جھٹ سے بوے اک دوست ـ فکر هر کس بقدر همت اوست

In doubt......to prefer—he is always in doubts whether to prefer the dictates of the mind, soul or conscience, or whether to look to the dictates and needs of the body. The

soul says that man should deny himself comforts and luxury and lead a life of austerity and piety. The body says that man should indulge in luxuries ("Eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow you may die"). Man does not know which course to follow. *Born but .... to err*—he is born in this world and he should have lived an immortal life. But he is destined to die. He has the power of reasoning but he often commits mistakes. *Alike in......or too much*—Whether he may think too little or too much he has such a weak power of reasoning that he is alike in his ignorance. *Chaos of...... disabused*—Thus, there is a lot of confusion in his thoughts and feelings ; his thoughts drag him in one direction and his passions in the other. He is deceived and undeceived by himself. His own thoughts sometimes take him in the right direction and sometimes in the wrong direction. *Created half......to fall*—He has been created by God in such a manner that he may half rise heavenward but at the same time he has imperfections which make him fall. *Great lord......to all*—although he is called the roof and crown of creation yet he is a prey to all. *Sole judge...... hurl'd*—He is all in all to judge the truth and yet he is thrown into endless errors. For example, a judge who sits on judgment may be very wise and yet he may come to a wrong judgment. *The glory......the world*!—He is the most glorious creature in the world, and yet he is the joke of all and a sort of puzzle in the world. *Wondrous creature*—wonderful act of creating. *Empyreal sphere*—highest heaven in all astronomy which was supposed to be sphere of pure fire or light.

(4) Critical Appreciation

These few lines are selected out of Pope's long poem entitled *Essay on Man*. Pope indulges in moral reflections in this poem as it is evident from the lines selected. He reflects on the greatness as well as the weakness of man, of human nature and of his power of reasoning. He points out the dualism of body and soul and the perfection and imperfection of man. He considers that whereas man is the glory of the world, yet he is the jest and riddle of the

world. Secondly, Pope is the master of an epigrammatic style, *i.e.*, his lines read like proverbs. Indeed many of his phrases and lines have become proverbial. Thirdly, in spite of the high moral tone of the poem, yet there is no depth of criticism of life to be found in this poem. Pope was a confused thinker. He did not have any clear-cut doctrine about faith and the ultimate object of life. He is unable to present consistent and deeply philosophical ideas on this great subject. However, the poem contains many passages which are justly famous, and are still often quoted, for their rhetorical beauty and power. In this poem Pope also shows himself a great master of the heroic couplet, *i.e.*, first line rhyming with the second and the third with the fourth as we commonly find in old type of Urdu poetry. Pope has a power of condensed and happy phrasing which is rarely found in English poetry.

(5) Paraphrase

Lines 1—18. When this much is established that whatever exists in the universe is perfectly right, then do not think that God will descend and explain the riddle of the creation to you any further. On the contrary, you should try to understand your own self, because it is only by this study that you can know about mankind in general. Placed as man is on the isthmus of the world between life before birth and life in the hereafter, he is gifted with such contradictory qualities as widsom and ignorance, greatness and vileness, and certitude and doubt that he is in a fix to understand whether he is a god on earth (looking to his greatness) or a beast in no way better than other creatures (in respect of his weakness). He thus remains in a state of doubt dominated at times by thoughts of greatness or passions of pride, yet ending in a chaos of both thoughts and passions with his entire reasoning crumbling down to an error of sheer ignorance. Still with the defects, he possesses the capacity to set himself right. Created as he is with contradictory qualities of success and failure, greatness and degradation, truth and error, making himself at times high enough to be an object of glory at times low enough to be

the laughting stock of the world, man proves himself to be an amazing riddle amidst the rest of His creation.

Lines 19—30. Wonderful creature, Man, go and raise yourself to the height of progress with the development of science in its various spheres (whether it concerns the measuring of the earth, or the weighing of the air, or the gauging of the tides, or the study of planets or that of the sun and their relative movements), or with the attainment of sublimity in the realm of thought like Plato trying to ascend to the level of the all-good, all-perfect and all-fair Christ; or go and follow the maze of senseless imitations like the oriental priests running thoughtlessly in circles in imitation of the sun. Both the qualities of thoughtfulness and absurdity are within yourself. You are gifted with wisdom enough to rule the world, yet having an equally great defect of doubt which compels you to droop into thought and remain bewildered in a mess of foolish ideas.

(6) Points to Remember

1. Pope shows many contradiction that he finds in man.

2. He thinks that man should try to understand himself before making any attempt to understand God.

3. He thinks that man is a riddle and is incomplete. He is caught up in two extremes. He is neither very good nor very bad.

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5. HUMAN FOLLY

(1) Introduction

This and the other poem (*Proper Study of Mankind*) are pieces that have been taken from Pope's well known poem, *The Essay on Man.* It is a repository of the typical ideas of the day, the doctrine of plentitude based on flippant and shallow optimism, the belief in a universe that is

rationally constructed, the concept of order and the understanding of social benevolence. It comes very near to what true philosophical poetry can be, and at times attains to it.

In this poem Pope describes the foolishness of human beings. He is always oppressed with vanity of thoughts, such as his knowledge, fame and wealth. This is the circle in which a poor creature (the Man) runs wildly.

(2) Paraphrase

In this world there would be least who wishes to share their knowledge, popularity and wealth with othar fellow beings. A learned man is always proud that he had explored the world and studied nature and equal to him a fool is very happy that he did not waste his life is learning. Further a rich man feels happiness knowing that he has a lot of wealth as beside him a poor fellow is not free from fraudness that he has the wealth of content and thinks that heaven is for him.

Just see the blind beggar dance with a lame man who is singing, the hero is stupified by drinking, the king is satisfied of his position. A thinker is absorbed in his ideas to which he thinks the blessing of god and is the true wealth of this immortal world and a poet is happy with his poetry. Whatever the status of a man is one thing will be common of all kind of man and that is pride which is the real source of happiness for him. The same pride is running throughout ages. Hope continonusly lives with us till we approach to death.

Then we see a child who is guided by natural law, rushes towards a straw to sooth his feeling. When comes in youth some inspiring games make him delight. A pipe-player is feeling delight with his pipe. Beads and prayer beads are only the toys for man and for ali ages. Man is pleased with these baseless things, then death approaches to him and the play of this poor fellow (the Man) is over.

(3) Words meaning

Cripple : lame man. *Sot* : Stupified by drinking *or* habitual drunkard. *Lunatic* : Affected with a person. *Rattle* : Move along rapidly. *Tickled* : Uncertain *or* insecure. **Garter** : A band used to tie the stocking.

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6. AN EPISTLE TO DR. ARBUTHNOT

(1) Introduction

(*This Epistle contains 222 lines. There is 91 lines selected in the "Textbook"*).

Another heading of this poem is "The prologue of the satires." It contains the famous description of Addison under the name of Atticus. There are many lines in this poem which are familiar as household words. During the last years of Queen Anne, Pope belonged to the literary circle of Swift, the great satirist. This was a group of satirical writers who had formed into club named Scriblerus Club after Martinus Scriblerus, who is an imaginary pedant. The chief members of this club were Atterbury, Arbuthnot, Gay, Parnell, and Pope himself. Arbuthnot was introduced to Pope by Swift as a man who could do everything but walk. Arbuthnot was an accomplished physician with an amiable disposition. He won the warmest gratitude of Pope by his skill and care. He was a man of learning and had written a satire against Woodward, the Geologist. Gay, the author of *The Beggar's Opera*, also entered into an alliance with Pope and continued the war against Ambrose Phillips. After Swift's retirement to Ireland, the Scriblerus Club languished and a new party was formed at Twickenham, the residence of Pope. This party was made up of Pope, the most finished poet of the day, Swift, the greatest humourist of the day, Bolingbroke, the most brilliant politician, Congreve, the wittiest writer of comedy and Gay, the author of the most successful burlesque.

It was an age of ferocious politics, and although Pope was not a politician, yet he was drawn in the vortex of politics, making strong friendships and enmities. Addison was Pope's rival poet. Addison praised Ambrose Phillips and was suspected by Pope of instigating him to write a rival translation of Homer. Thus began the war with Addison as a result of which we have the present *Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot.* In his *Dunciad*, Pope had already fired a general volley into the whole crowd of poetasters and ever since worked in the spirit of Swift. He had a great contempt for the mob of stupid, thick-skinned, scriblers, hackwriters, and poetasters. The Epistles proved to be an excellent medium for pouring forth his bitter condemnation of the men.

(2) Occasion

One day Bolingbroke came into Pope's room, took up a Horace, and observed that the first satire of the second book of Horace would suit Pope's style. Bolingbroke and Pope had already projected a scheme of criticising the poetasters. This scheme was now put into execution. Pope translated the satire of Horace pointed out as his model by Bolingbroke, and sent it to press. It was a brilliant success, and this again led to his *Epistle to Arbuthnot* which includes his bitter attack upon Lord Hervey, his rival in love for Lady Mary Wortley Montagu. This epistle was part of a general *apologia provita sua* (an apology in behalf of his own life). This epistle was, afterwards called the *Prologue to the Satire*.

(3) Critical Appreciation

Critics differ in their opinion of Pope because of his being a satirist, and the merciless way in which he ridiculed his contemporaries in the *Dunciad* and the *Epistles*. The enmity raised by his satires clouded the judgment of his critics, so that those whom he wounded and all who sympathised with them failed to appreciate his true greatness. Passion is the ruling sentiment of his epistles. Moreover

there is a lot of affectation in them which was in part the result of the literary battles in which Pope was often the challenger without the physical strength to endure them. Yet his mode of composition was natural to a mind incapable of sustained and continuous thought. There is in these letters, less of venom and falsehoods in which he generally indulged and we come across some genuine affections and generous feelings also. The best comment on the *Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot* is by Leslie Stephen. "This Epistle is his apologia. In its some four hundred lines, he has managed to compress more of his feelings and thoughts than would fill an ordinary auto-biography. It is true that the epistle requires a commentator. It wants some familiarity with the events of Pope's life, and many lines convery a part of their meaning unless we are familiar not only with the events, but with the character of the persons mentioned. Passages over which we pass carelessly at the first reading then come out with wonderful freshness, and single phrases throw a sudden light upon hidden depths of feeling. It is also true, unluckily, that parts of it must be read by the rule of contraries They tell us not what Pope really was, but what he wished others to think him, and what he probably endeavoured to persuade himself that he was. How far he succeeded in imposing upon himself is indeed a very curious question which can never be fully answered. There is the strangest mixture of honesty and hypocrisy." Behind these masks of hypocrisy and mystification, we can, however, find out an extremely sensitive heart, as capable of bitter resentment as of warm affection. The excessive vehemence of the satire is striking, and we can almost hear his victim screaming out at his tormenter. There is something cruel in Pope's laughter as in Swift's. This Epistle is remarkable for some of his half-philosophical but most biting satires. They also furnish examples of the most artful flattery, subtly veiled under an air of blame. There is, at times, a delicate mock-heroic pleasantry. Above all, the Epistles completely reveal his character—"childishly vain and thin-skinned,

rancorous and snobbish, but truly attached to his parents, his friends, and his art." As a man, Pope was a strange mixture of selfishness and generosity and hence we come across warm praises as well as bitter satires. As a writer, however, his satires would always place him above all others of his time, so that the age to which he belonged can be justly called the age of Pope.

(4) Note and Explanations

Analysis *Lines* 1—11. Many of the so-called friends are moved entirely by selfish consideration, and are too gross in their flattery. I did not take to literary pursuits in order to earn fame, because I had a natural gift for poetry from my childhood. *Why did I write... you preserve to bear*. **Paraphrase.**—Why did I take to literary pursuits ? What was my sin or the sin of my parents, unknown to me, which made me write poetry and became a miserable poet ? Well, even when I was a child and had no idea of attracting notice like so many fools, the art of versification instinctively came to me and I began to compose verses. But like others I never left off a profitable profession to take to the idle trade of a poet. I never neglected my duty or disobeyed a father to follow the poet's profession. My poetic inspiration only served to please some female friends of mine and not a wife, as in the case of other poets, because I never married. My poetry was meant to comfort me throughout my long life of miserable health and to uphold the professional kill of Dr. Arbuthnot who saved my life many a time, so that my poetic inspiration had a salutary effect on my mind and consoled me in my afflictions.

Analysis. *Lines* 12—33 —I published my poems at the frantic requests and high praise of friends like Walsh, Garth, Congreve and Swift. Many eminent men also approved my writings, hailing me as a poet. But then my verses were inoffensive and my poetry was merely descriptive. It remained so under grave provocation given to me by the poetasters.

Notes.—*But why then publish?*—I wrote out of inspiration, and so where was the necessity of publishing my poems? In the next few lines the author tells us that it was at the request of appreciative friends. *Granville*—Lord Lansdowne, a patron of letters *Walsh*—a contemporary critic. *Garth*—a well-known writer of the time and the author of the *Dispensary* *Inflamed*—fired my imagination. *Congreve*—a famous dramatist of the time and the wittiest writer of comedy. *Swift*—the author of famous *Gulliver's Travel* and the greatest satirist of the time. He was Pope's model in his pungent satires. *Endured my lays*—these friends put up with my verses and considered them to be good *Talbot*—the Duke of Shrewsbury, a great politician of the time. *Somers*—the Lord Keeper, and a famous politician. *Sheffield*—Earl of Mulgrave, another contemporary politician and a patron of letters. *Mitred Rochester*—Atterbury, the Bishop of Rochester, who was one of the members of the Martinus Scriblerus Club. He was a man of fine literary taste and a judicious critic of Pope. He took part in the literary warfare over the famous controversy with Bentley. *Nod the head*—move his head in approval. *St John's self*—St. John himself. This title was given to Viscount Bolingbroke, the most brilliant politician of the day. *Before*—in the past. *With open...more*—hailed me as a poet of the same calibre as Dryden. *By these*—by such eminent persons. *Their author*—*i.e.*, Pope himself *From these...books*—the criticism of such great men will be authoritative and lasting. *Burnets*—men like Bishop Burnet who was also a historian. *Old Mixons*—Obscure hackwriters like *Old Mixons*. *Cooks*—despicable poetasters like Cook, who is now completely forgotten. *Soft were my numbers*—In the beginning my verses were quite mild and inoffensive. My poetry then had not assumed a satiric vein. *Who could...of sense?*—My poetry then was merely descriptive and did not contain any superb poetical thoughts. Therefore none could be offended with it. When it did not contain any idea, but mere description, it could not have hit any one. *Gentle Fanny*—The assumed name of Lady Mary. Lord Hervey, the husband of Lady Mary, had been described as 'Lord Fanny' in Pope's

satires, and so Lady Mary became Lady Fanny. *Like gentle ...theme*—my verses then were complimentary and descriptive like the writings of gentle Lady Mary. *A painted... stream*—I would then paint in my verses either a beautiful woman or a babbling brook. *Gildon*—a critic of the day. *Draw his venal quill*—he could not then write satirical poetry, and yet Gildon the critic meanly attacked me. *I wished......still*—I asked the man to dinner to show my goodwill and did not write anything in reply to his scurrilous criticism. *Dennis*—A critic of the day who published a very bitter attack upon Addison's *Cato.* Through a misunderstanding he afterwards thought that Pope had indirectly instigated this attack through his bookseller, Lintot. This might have been a trap set up by Pope. At any rate, he fell upon Dennis as soon as the trap was sprung, and retaliated in an anonymous poem called *Narrative of the Frenzy of John Dennis*. Pope seems always to have considered the man of the type of Dennis as outside the pale of humanity. *I never...debt*—I did not retaliate because I did not want to make money by scurrilous writings and by appearing in the role of a sensation-monger. *If want...the mint*—these critics were perhaps forced by poverty or madness to write so vilely against me, and so I kept silence. It was useless to wage war against lunatics and bankrupts.

Analysis. *Lines* 34-69.—I always bowed to the critics if they were right, and never tried to rob even insignificant writers of the little reputation they enjoyed. But when I began to describe the poetasters as they really were they became angry. I only modestly denounced their way of writing poetry which was 'prose-run-mad.'

Notes.—*Did some...abroad*—If a more sensible critic published a criticism of my books. *If wrong... the rod*—I smiled if his criticism was wrong, but I bowed to his superior judgment if he was right. *Pains...and sense*—the critics are right in saying that they work hard and study a lot before they set themselves to criticism and yet they do not succeed as a critic because they are wanting in vigour,

good taste, and common sense *Commas...mite*—they are very good in correcting the punctuations and I would be the last man to take away the little reputation they enjoy, and desist them from doing the best they can. *One sprig cf laurel*—a slight fame. Laurel was a garland of bay-leaves which was considered in ancient Greece to be the highest prize that could be given to a hero or a poet. So a sprig of laurel would mean 'just a little fame.' *Ribalds*—irreverent jesters employing indecent language. *Slashing*—fierce in satire *Bentley*—a great classical scholar of the time over whom raged a famous controversy, in which Pope and Atterbury joined. He is the most conspicuous figure in the *New Dunciad* published in 1742. Pope takes him as the representative of a rank pedant, but in reality he was a man of real genius. It is a pity that Pope, who was really a fine judge of literature, should have grossly misappreciated the genius of Bentley. *Pidling*—trivial in jests. *Tibalds*—writers like Tibald who edited Shakespeare, and whose criticisms of Shakespeare are really better than Pope's. *Wight*—a wretched fellow *Scans and spells* those who can criticise only spelling and scansion and not the meaning of verses. *Each word-catcher syllables*—the critic who bases his criticism on linguistic and verbal flaws and cannot discriminate between the good thoughts and the bad. He only looks to the syllables of a line in order to find out mistakes in scanning and metre. *Even such...Shakespeare name*—Even such insignificant critics may be known to posterity simply because they are mentioned by a great writer like Milton or Shakespeare. *Amber*—a kind of sticky resin. *Grubs* —larva of insects. *Pretty...how the devil they got there*—**Explanation** —The whole humour here is based on the proverbial phrase "A fly in the amber". Amber is so sticky that if a fly sits on it, it cannot get out of it So when it dries up the fly remains in it. Hence, the phrase means a flaw in composition. The author says here that it is interesting to look at some hair or straw or dirt or larva or worm mixed up with the amber. Amber may be valuable, but not these admixtures that get into it by chance. All the same, we wonder how these things get mixed up with the amber. Similarly, when we find insignificant writers'

names being preserved in the writings of great authors we do not set any value upon them. We know they are obscure writers, and lived down in history simply because they have been mentioned by a famous writer. All the same, we wonder how could such great writers have mentioned their names. *Were others angry*—If other writers showed anger at me, I pardoned them also. *Well might...due*—It was but natural for them to take cudgels against me because I exposed their shortcomings, and so I did not mind their anger. *A man's true merit......can guess ?*—**Paraphrase**.—It is not difficult to point out the true merit of a writer but then each man has his own estimate of his merits in which he firmly believes, but it is not correct. How is it possible to please a man like this by pandering to his self-consciousness which is the outcome of pride and stupidity combined? Moreover, how is it possible to find out what opinion one holds of himself ? *The bard...renown*—The poet who earns fame by writing pastoral poems, which are all borrowed from other poets. This refers to Pope's arch enemy, Ambrose Philip, who was a pastoral poet of some renown. Pope here denounces him as a plagiarist (literary thief). *Who turns......half a crown*—who writes a translation of Persian tales on meagre emoluments. *Just......appear*—his writings at once disclose his poverty of thoughts. *Hard-bound brain*—stiff and stupid. *And strains......a year*—And with great mental strain he writes eight original lines in one year, which shows his low mental capacity. *He who...... nothing left*—There is another poetaster who is always wanting in merit, although he lives on literary theft. The fact is he cannot even make use of what he steals from other poets, and so remains unknown and poor. Such plagiarists would always be wanting in good poetry, and in want of money. *And he......meaning*—there is another poetaster who sometimes writes sense but more often inclines to non-sense. He does not attempt to write sense, but by mistake sometimes composes verses having some meaning. *Fustian*—bombastic writing. *It is not... mad*—what he writes is the misuse of prose. This he thinks is poetry, but the abnormal usage of high flown words does not turn prose into poetry (This line is famous). *Bad*—bade. *All these......translate*—

I tried to describe all these silly poetasters in their true colours adopting a slightly satirical style. *Tate*—a contemporary poet who had translated the *Psalms* into verse. *And owned......Tate*—And I only said that nine poets of this type combined would be equal in worth to Tate, who is after all only a translator in verse and not as original writer. *Stamp*—their feet. *Not Addison himself was safe*—they declared that in this way I would not spare even Addison who had already established his fame. Note that the main object of this epistle was to run down Addison who is presented here as 'Atticus.'

Analysis. *Lines 70—91.*—Pope would treat all such revelers with contempt, who were all jealous and selfish. They were cowards and yet willing to bite. They were all swollen-headed, but at the same time would be so condescending that their obligation would not be felt. None can restrain laughing at men of this type.

Notes. *Lines 70—91. Peace to all such*—let me treat these revelers with contempt as they are too low to be taken notice of. *Were there one*—If among them there be a writer. *Fires*—poetic inspiration. *Each art to please*—gifted with each pleasing art. *Born to write*—has inborn gift to writing. *Live with ease*—is above want. *To rule alone*—to be the dictator of literature without recognising the greatness of any other writer. *Bear... ...near the throne*—Just as the Emperor of Turkey would not have any brother of his near the throne because that brother may at any time claim the throne and conspire against him. This is why the Emperor of Turkey was called 'the Sickman of Europe.' *Arts*—artifices, cunning stratagems. *Caused himself to rise*—by means of which he advanced in life. *But were there one whose fires......that caused himself to rise*—**Explanation**—Pope condemns all those poetasters who raved against him, but this, he says, did not mean that he was blind to merit. If among those scriblers a writer could be found with true poetic inspiration, having a fair ambition to fame, blessed with all those talents and arts which please the reader with an inborn gift of writing,

talking and living peacefully, he would certainly acknowledge him and his merits. But if he wanted to be the dictator without recognising the greatness of a rival author then he would look upon him with scronful eyes and hate him for the cunning ways devised by him for his self-advancement. Here Pope justifies the attitude taken by him against the whole lot of his contemporaries excepting one or two writers. His mission was to run done alike the worthless scriblers and those who were proud of their merits to the exclusion of all other meritorious writers. *Damn with faint praise*—condemn him by paying him a left handed compliment. *Assent with civil leer*—give your assent to his greatness by a sideway look so that others may understand that you are merely befooling him. *And without...... sneer*—In this way you can teach others to sneer at a man without showing that you are really sneering, *i.e.*. keep up your appearance and at the same time condemn the man. *Willing.........strike*—Let him smart under your hits but do not actually strike him. *Hesitate dislike*—hesitate in announcing your dislike of his poetry. *Alike......friend*—such a man is bound to be blamed as a coward enemy and praised as a suspicious friend.. *So obliging......obliged*—*i. e*, too condescending and hence people expected help from him as a matter of course without feeling any obligation. *Cato*—Cato the younger (95—46 B.C.). He was elected the Tribune of Rome, and on the outbreak of the civil war, being in danger of capture, he slew himself rather than be taken by the enemy. *Give......laws*—guide his followers in the art of versification. *Templars*—the soldier knights of the twelfth century who organised themselves into a band for the purpose of protecting pilgrims in their journeys to and from Jerusalem. They were established in England about 1180 and founded numerous religious houses in various parts of Europe. *Every sentence raise*—take up every line of his poetry and applaud it. *Foolish face of praise*—look foolish while they praise. *Who but must laugh*—none can restrain his laughter. *Who would not......he*—If Addison turns out to be such a man then it is really a matter of regret, and instead of laughing at it you should weep. Atticus is the assumed name of Addison in this satire.

Recapitulatory Questions

Q. 1. What were the circumstances that led Pope to write his Epistle?

Ans. Reproduce the "Introduction".

Q. 2. How far does Pope's Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot reflect his own character? In what sense can it be called his Apologia?

Ans. Reproduce the last para of Critical Appreciation.

Q. 3. Characterise Pope's satire as you find it in his Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot.

Ans. Reproduce the first portion of "Critical Appreciation".

Q. 4. Find examples of epigram, antithesis and climax or anticlimax in the lines from ***Proper Study of Mankind*.**

Ans. (*a*) The following is an example of epigram :—
" The proper study of mankind is man."

(*b*) The following are examples of antithesis :—

(*i*) With too much knowledge for the sceptic side,
With too much weakness for the stoic's pride.

(*ii*) In doubt to deem himself a god or beast;
In doubt his mind or body to prefer.

(*c*) The following are examples of anti-climax :—

Great lord of all things, yet a prey to all.
Sole judge of truth, and riddle of the world.

Q. 5. Give Pope's philosphy of life as given by him in his "Proper Study of Mankind" or "The Essays on Man".

Ans. See Introduction, Critical Appreciation and Summary.

Q. 6. Show your acquaintance with, and write a critical appreciation on (a) An Essay on Criticism. (b) Proper Study of Mankind.

Ans. Reproduce the Critical Appreciations on the poems.

Q. 7. Explain the following passage with reference to the context :-

Those rules of old discover'd, not devised,
Are Nature still, but Nature methodised :
Nature, like liberty, is but restrain'd
By the same laws which first herself ordaín'd
...Of all the causes which conspire to blind
Man's erring judgment, and misguide the mind,
What the weak head with strongest bias rules,
Is PRIDE, the never-failing vice of fools
Whatever Nature has in worth denied,
She gives in large recruits of needless pride;
For as in bodies, thus in souls we find
What wants in blood and spirits, swell'd with wind :
Pride where wit fails, steps in to our defence,
And fills up all the mighty void of sense.

Ans. These lines are taken from Pope's An Essay on Criticism. Here he offers practical suggestions on the art of criticism. According to him, a critic as a cultured and intelligent person, should always avoid big mistakes by committing very litte in writing or in talk. He should never be whimsical about the irrelevant and petty things which do not much concern the subject under examination.

Explanation. A critic should observe the rules of nature (which are but a systematic arrangement of the corporate human nature) based on ancient works of genius. Nature in the microcosm is that which, like the spirit of liberty, exhibits law and order observed from its very beginning in human reason. A critic should next be careful about ' pride ' which is the unavoidable defect among fools and the strongest element to prejudice a weak-minded person. This is the greatest cause which misguides a normal

man's mind and blinds him from correct judgment. Nature provides plenty of pride in a human being where it denies real virtue ; it fills in the vacant mind just as a body without blood is swelled up with empty wind. Thus, where intelligence fails, pride comes up to one's aid and fills in the vacuum created in the mind by the loss of wisdom But if once the correct judgment dispells this mist of ' pride ' from our mind, then Truth dawns upon us with the vigour of a bright day ; and for this end one should not trust his own intelligence. He should rather utilize every friend or foe's comments and rectify his defects.

Q. 8. Illustrate Pope's character and his contributions towards English poetry.

Ans. *His Character*: Long regarded as the foremost man of letters of his day, he was pitted and spoiled by admiring friends. His petty revengeful nature perpetually turned friends into foes. The history of relations with his contemporaries is a tangled record of miserable jealousies and quarrels We must nevertheless be charitable to him because of the fact that his extreme irritability and peevishness were in large measure the result of a chronic ill-health. As he puts it in his *Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot* his devoted physician, his life was one "long disease." Yet despite his individualism, he worked steadily almost to the last, and with a sincere love of literature for its own sake, which is the more noteworthy because it was very rare at the time.

As John Drinkwater remarks, his life was a long disease, his life-long bitterness must be charitably excused. It was a "noble rage" for learning, an insatiable curiosity for exploring human nature which wrecked a feeble health that eighteenth century medicine could hardly have improved. He was extraordinarily sensitive ; he loathed every kind of sport in which some living creature was pursued. His wit was his only weapon and he used it ruthlessly—often treacherously, and never with the bluff,

open, straight-forwardness which causes some of Dryden's strokes to sound like a slap. His mind was a clearing-house for all the scandalous gossip, and he was specialist in the ignoble art of quarrelling. He had no chivalry in his cripple soul—he satirised Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, to whom he made violent love, in the most brutal lines ever written by man against woman. He hated his literary rivals, great or small ; he includes Bentley and Defoe among the dunces of his "Dunciad" which too often rises to a shriek, a shriek, femininism, to be equal to the virile satires of Dryden. And as a punishment, the sarcasm of the merest scribbler (small writer) caused him to writhe in anguish. Indeed, the venomous poet's character and curses tax our chasity at times beyond its power.

His Works: The following estimate of Pope's works is given by Hudson: Pope's poetic career falls quite naturally into three periods—an early and a late period of original work divided by a period of translation. (1) To the period before 1715 belong a number of miscellaneous poems of which most important are : *Four Pastorals*, short poems on spring, summer, autumn and winter : *The Messiah*, a poetic rendering of the Messianic passages in Isaiah. *Windsor Forest* was inspired by Deham's *Copper's Hill* which clearly shows how the classical school was indifferent to the real beauties of Nature. Pope's landscape is copied out of the Greek and Latin poets rather than painted from first-hand knowledge of what he professes to describe. The *Essay on Criticism* is certainly a very remarkable achievement.

(1) The poem is of great interest as a popular interpretation of the literary creed of the age. *The Rape of the Lock* may safely be called Pope's masterpiece Lord Petre cut a lock of hair from the head of a young beauty. This parctical joke led to a quarrel between the two families, and Pope was appealed to by a common friend, to throw oil on troubled waters by turning the whole thing into jest. Pope defines the poem as "heroic-comical" but it is better to call it Mock-Epic. Here trivial occurrences are handled

with all the dignity and seriousness which properly belong to the epic. By the general flippancy of its tone, and its cynical attitude towards women, it reveals the callousness (hard-heartedness) of Pope's age.

(2) The translation of the *Iliad* and the *Odessy* together called *Tomer*, has never ceased to give enjoyment, but it contains more of Pope than Homer. The real difficulty lay in the fact that neither he nor his age could understand or enter into the spirit of Homer or the Homeric world. His translation has every other merit except fidelity to the original. It is, in fact, not Homer, but a very striking and brilliant piece of 18th century work.

(3) In the end Pope confined himself almost wholly to satiric and didactic poetry. His principal works we-e the *Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot*, and the *Dunciad*. The *Epistle* is most frankly personal of all Pope's writings and contains among other well-known passages the famous character-study of Addison under the name of *Atticus*. The *Dunciad* is a satire on "dunces" (fools or blockheads)—the bad poets, pedants, and shabby critics—of Pope's day. It was a loud and sometimes a coarse burst of mockery directed at the little scribbles of the hour, and at every one else who had awakened Pope's ill-humour by any sort of attack upon him. For 20 years he had been bottling up his resentment, and now he poured it forth in a glitter of liquid poison. Finally, appeared his *Essay on Man* in four instalments in 1733-34. It was the result of his reading of philosophy, which was not well-digested.

KEY QUESTIONS

Q. 1. Sum up Pope's Critical view ?

Ans. Saintsbury sums up the critical attitude of Pope in the following words: "It can be sketched very fairly as being a sort of compromise between a supposed following of the ancients, and a real application, to literature in general and to poetry in particular, of the general taste and cast of thought of the time. The following of the Ancient—it has been often pointed out already—was, as the Articles of the Church of England have it, a 'corrupt following': those who said Aristotle meant now nobody more ancient than Boileau, now no one more ancient that Vida, scarcely ever any one more ancient than Horace. The classics as a whole were very little studies, at least by those who busied themselves most with modern literature; and it had entered into the heads of few that, after all, standard of one literature might, or rather must, require very considerable alteration before they could apply to another. But Greek and Roman literature presented a body of poetry and of most other kinds, considerable, admittedly excellent, and mostly composed under the influence of distinct and identical critical principles. Very few men had a complete knowledge of even a single modern literature; hardly a man in England, except mere antiquaries, knew Old English even as a part. There was probably not a man in Europe till Gray who had any wide reading at once in classical literature and in the medieval and modern literatures of different countries. Accordingly, the principles of ancient criticism, not even in their purity fully adequate to modern works, and usually presented, not in their purity but in garbled and bastardised form, were all that they had to stand by.

"This classical, or pseudo-classical, doctrine was further affected, in the case of literature generally, by the *ethos* of the time, and, in the case of poetry, by the curious delusion as to hard and fast syllabic prosody which has been noticed in connection with Bysshe. Classicism, in any pure sense, was certainly not to blame for this, for everybody with the

slightest tinge of education knew that the chief Latin meter admitted the substitution of trisyllabic for disyllabic feet in every place but one, and most knew that this substitution was almost as widely permitted by Greek in a standard metre, approaching the English still nearer. But it had, as we have seen, been a gradually growing delusion, for a hundred and fifty years, in almost every kind of non-dramatic poetry.

"As for the general tendency, the lines of that are clear—though the arbitrary extension and stiffening of them remain a little incomprehensible. Nature was to be the test; but an artificialised Nature, arranged according to the fashion of a town-haunting society—a Nature which submitted herself to a system of convention and generalisation. In so far as there was any real general principle it was that you were to be like everybody else—that singularity, except in doing the usual thing best, was to be carefully avoided. Pope, being a man of genius, could not help transcending this general conception constantly by his execution, not seldom by his thoughts, and sometimes in his critical precepts. Bnt it remains the conception of his time and of himself."

Q. 2. What are the general characteristics of Pope's poetry ?

Ans. Edmund Gosse remarks that for 30 years Pope was so completely the centre of poetical attention in England that he may almost be said to have comprised the poetry of his time. There is no second instance of any English poet preserving for so long a period a supremacy comparable to his. It is possible to defend the position that one or two other versemen of the age did some particular thing better than Pope, though even this requires argument but it is quite certain that he alone excelled over a wide range of subjects. Though he triumphed over the entire field, yet the area of that field was extremely restricted There was never a period, from the Middle Ages till today, when the practice of verse was limited to so few forms as it was under

the reign of Pope. Lyrical writing, except in the mildest and most artificial species, was not cultivated ; there was no poetical drama, tragic or comic ; there was no description of nature, save, the merest convention ; there was scarcely any love-poetry ; no devotional verse of any importance ; no epic or elegy or ode that deserved the name. Poetry existed, practically, only in three forms –the critical or satirical, the narrative or didactic and the occasional (*i.e* , poems on miscellaneous topics) these three, indeed, being so closely correlated that it is not always very easy to distinguish them.

It was Pope's aim to redeem verse from unholy uses to present to the reader none but true thoughts and noble expressions and to dedicate the gravest form to the highest purpose.

"Pope is gifted for clear thinking, at least with regard to detail ; his agile mind grasps the characteristic angles of things, the prominent features of their relief. On the other hand, the writer knows how to convey this easy, happy exercise of intelligence, how to render it by the most suitable, the briefest and most telling words ; and thus the pleasure which the poetry of Pope procures us rises primarily from a joyous intellectual activity, which moves among ideas, seizes them, combines them, arranges them into groups, with so much ease that it seems to soar of itself in a full, bright light above the uncertainty and confusion of human thought." Thus Cazamian points out, that the art of expression, very careful and minute, aims at ease. *The heroic couplet* is inseparably associated with the mastery of Pope. Thrown out in succession by a concentrated force of energy which lets itself go each time without ever giving itself away or spending itself, for it retains perfect self control ; these lines are like glittering shafts ; they have the elegance and cold gleam of polished steel.

Cazamian further asks, Does this poetry appeal only to reason, to spite, to a sense of comedy, to moral judgement ? Is the pleasure it awakens to be found wholly in clearness, justness and order ? Or does it stir up sensations

and emotions ; does it allow for imagery, and does it move our feeling ? To a great extent it is a poetry of reason, moral judgemeuts and clearnness and not of sensations and emotions It is a poetry of realism, and there is in Pope the intellectual desire for concrete truth. His imagination is severely kept in check by the sobriety, the selection, and the moralizing character of the themes although it preserves throughout a robust quality.

Pope was a great satirist. He attempted elegant mockery in his poem "*The Rape of the Lock*." In *Dunciad* he satirised the miserable writers and poets of his time. It was a satire on dunces—the bad poets and the conceited critics. In this satire Pope tried to pay off old scores, and to hit hard some of his enemies. In two other satires entitled *Moral Essays* and *Imitations of Horace* he wrote poetry for the cultivated readers. As a satirist Pope occupies a very eminent position. He is always brilliant, sharp, and caustic in his witty shafts. Much of his satire is free from vulgarity, cheapness or savage resentment.

To sum up Pope was not a great poet, but he was certainly a great artist. He was one of the most conscious, painful and finished craftsmen. He lacked both the imaginative power and the depth of feeling without which high poetry is impossible. He had no originality and he contributed little of his own to great philosophy or high morality. He was undoubtedly the most consummate master of the classic couplet, and the best representative of the classical school of poets. He has often given gems of proverbial sayings in the form of heroic couplets, and it is no mean praise to say that after Shakespeare he is the most frequently quoted of English poets.

Q. 3. Write a short note on the classical poetry with special reference to Pope.

Ans. The word 'classic' acquired an entirely different meaning in the 18th century. The Elizabethan writers were led by ***patriotism***, by ***enthusiasm***, and in general by ***romantic emotions***. They wrote in a natural style. without

regard to rules ; and though they exaggerated and used too many words, their works are delightful because of their vigour and freshness and fine feelings. In the following age partriotism had largely disappeared from politics and enthusiasm from literature. Poets no longer wrote naturally, but artificially, with strange and fantastic verse form to give effect, since fine feeling was wanting. And this is the general character of the poetry of the Puritan Age. Gradually the writers rebelled against the exaggeration of both the natural and the fantastic style. They demanded that poetry should follow exact rules ; and in this they were influenced by French writers, especially by Boileau and Rapin, who insisted on precise methods of writing poetry, and he professed to have discovered their rules in the classics of Horace and Aristotle. The good influence of the classic movement was exercised upon the Elizabethan Drama in that beauty of form and definiteness of expression which characterize the dramas of Greece and Rome ; and in the work of Dryden and his followers, we see a revival of classicism in the effort to make English literature conform to rules established by the great writers of other nations. The general tendency of literature was to look at life critically, to emphasize intellect rather than imagination, the form rather than the context of a sentence. Writers strove to suppress all emotions and enthusiasm, and to use only precise and elegant methods of expression. This is what is often meant by the 'classicism' of the age of Pope. It refers to the critical, intellectual spirit of many writers, to the fine polish of their heroic couplets or of the elegance of the prose, and not any resemblance which their work bears to true classical literature. In a word, the classic movement had become pseudo-classic, a false or sham classicism ; and the latter term is now often used to designate a considerable part of eighteenth century literature.

As a classical poet, Pope's aim was to reach absolute correctness to express himself clearly and smoothly. He was ready to receive subjects from his friends, or from preceding writres. He did not care to originate. His

business was attractive and lucid expression ; it was to set gems, not to create them. He adopted at an early time one particular metrical form—the heroic couplet, and adhered to the end. In the making of verses, in the particular metre which he cultivated, Pope could scarcely be excelled His heroic couplets, often his single lines, have lucidity, a strength, a wit, an aptness that cannot be gainsaid His poems are either didactic or ethical or satirical. He was the poet of town, the interpreter or commentator of everyday life. He was above all things an artist, one of the most conscious, most persevering and most polished of writers. He is a representative of a classical school.

Q. 4. Discuss Pope's poetry as criticism of life.
(*P. U. B.A: Litt. 1970*).

Ans. Re-produce the Introduction of "*Human Folly*" with the answer No. 5.

Q 5. Elaborate the various aspects of Pope's poetry. (i) As a poet (ii) His classicism.

Answer—(*i*) Pope was the greatest poet of his age and one of the greatest versifiers of all ages. Next to Shakespeare, he is the most often quoted of English poets. He is easily the most elegant versifier of his age, and there is no question of his right to be regarded as a true poet. As a poet he possessed double power. He could crystallise the plain man's thought iuto memorable verse and he could express thoughts of the subtlest ingenuity.

Pope possessed a lively fancy, a power of satire almost unrivalled, and a skill in using words so consumate that there is no poet, excepting Shakespeare, who has left his mark upon the language so strongly. He has said in the best words what we all know and feel, but cannot express, and has made that classical which in weaker hands would be commonplace.

His reputation as a poet has varied from time to time. The writers of the eighteenth century considered him to be the greatest poet of the age. The writers of the nineteenth century pointed out his lack of purely lyrical gift.

Some critics doubted whether Pope was a poet at all. But in the twentieth century he has regained his reputation as a poet.

Pope is the representative poet of his century. His literary merits and defects are alike conspicuous in his works. Pope developed his talent for satire and argument in verse and it is in this province of literature that he has written his strongest works. His great aim as a poet was to express himself clearly and smoothly. He did not care to originate. His business was attractive and lucid expression.

Pope was, above all things, an artist, one of the most conscious, most polished of writers. His aim was to reach absolute correctness. He adopted at an early time one particular metrical form—the heroic couplet—and adhered to it to the end. His sensibility to the claims of art is exquisite, the adaptation of his style to his subject shows the hand of a master. Pope is the perfect craftsman and his technique is the perfection of subtlety.

Pope as a poet had his defects. He cannot sing. He has no ear for the subtlest melodies of verse. He is not a creative poet. There are no depths in Pope and there are no heights; he has neither eyes for the beauties of nature, nor ear for her harmonies.

(*ii*) Pope was the representative of the classical school. He was exactly the poet his age required. That age had neither the simplicity nor the heroism needed to produce great epic poetry; nor had it the exultant emotion or the heart-deep sadness from which the great enthusiasts of the lyric muse most often spring. What remains for the poet of such a dull and prosaic epoch but didactic and satirical verse! And among these branches of poetry, Pope is easily supreme among English poets.

The best passages in the *Essay on Man*, in the *Epistles and Satires*, and in *The Dunciad*, form the summit of Pope's art in the fullness of its maturity; they are also the summit of English classical poetry.

They owe this eminent merit to the union of a temperament with resolute labour. Pope is gifted for clear thinking, at least with regard to detail; his agile mind grasps the characteristic angles of things, the prominent features of their relief, those which they resemble or, above all, oppose one another at first sight.

The beauty, a beauty serene and still intellectual, is the precision of the thought; the aptness of the terms, and the strong regularity of the rhythms, answer to each other, and blend in a nervous and brilliant eloquence. This is the beauty of the classical style which is the characteristic of Pope as an artist.

No writer ever showed a temperament of ideal simplicity. A pure classicism—in the sense of literary rationalism —would be an aesthetic impossibility. The art of expression, very careful and minute, is achieved through a cadence of the language, which is one with the rhythm of the verse. The heroic couplet is inseparably associated with the mastery of Pope. The effects he draws from it are less poetic quality than those of Dryden; but in a narrow scale they acquire an incomparable effectiveness.

Q. 6. Compare Dryden and Pope as classicists.

Ans. "Classics" was a term which was applied in praise of the poetry of the Greek and Latin poets. It means "first class or the highest kind of poetry, and approved as a model." The eighteenth century poets Dryden, Pope, etc., followed the style of the Greek and Latin poets and considered them the best models and their poetry as the standard of literary perfection. They did not believe in the assertion of the individuality of the poet or his inspiration or genius, but rather they had faith in the fixed laws or rules set down by the ancient poets. Both Dryden and Pope translated profusely from the Greek and Latin classical writers. Dryden translated Virgil's *Aenied* in Heroic couplets and Juvenal. Pope made a translation of Homer in Heroic couplets.

Dryden was the foremost of the classical poets. He had "little imaginative power, little depth of feeling and little spiritual glow or fervour." He was a poet of "splendid intellectuality" and he possessed a manly vigour of style. He was actively interested in the religious and political controversies of his times and he wrote a number of poems to defend his political or religious creeds. One pet weapon in the hands of the classicists was the satire. Dryden has been recognised as one of the biggest satirists. In his *Absolam and Achitophel* he satirises the great figures of his times, the Duke of Buckingham and the Earl of Shaftesbury. Dryden popularised the Heroic couplet and made it a wonderful instrument of logic and satire. But his satire was sometimes crude and vulgar and lacked the polish and decency of genius. It became a powerful medium of expression in his hands.

Pope was the greatest of the classical poets and he is a typical classicist in his merits and demerits. He was a greater artist and a master of epigramatic style. He perfected the heroic couplet and wrote mostly end-stopped lines, and confined the sense within two lines. He perfected the heroic couplet by imparting it a great brilliancy and finish. He did not allow the sense to travel from one line to another. He fixed the place of the caesura or pause in the middle of the line. But he lacked imagination and the lyrical faculty. Unlike Dryden he was not interested in the political or religious controversies of his times, but he was an active partisan in the literary controversies. He took up the cudgels against poets, critics and poetasters of his times.

Pope's satire was always sharp like a rapier but unlike that of Dryden it was always refined. He was a great master of narrative and didactic poetry but he lacked the lyrical faculty.

Points to Remember

(1) Classicism—as the highest poetry. Greek and Latin models. (2) Individuality, inspiration and genius were suppressed. (3) Dryden's intellectual poetry, but lack of

imaginative power. (4) Took part in political and religious controversies. (5) A satirist. (6) Popularised the heroic couplet. (7) Pope a great artist. Perfected the heroic couplet. (8) But lacked imaginative and lyrical faculty (9) A partisan in literary controversies.

Q. 7. Comment on Pope's poetic diction.

Ans. Pope aimed at attaining absolute correctness. Also, he did not believe in variety in the mode of expression. He wanted to fix up the highest model once for all and wished that all other poets should follow it without any change or originality. He ruthlessly eliminated everything that was irregular or irrelevant; he smoothed everything rough or rugged; and he imparted the greatest finish and brilliancy to the Heroic Couplet.

The Heroic Couplet became in his hands a wonderful instrument of wit, satire, logic and literary criticism. He restricted the pause (for Caesura) to one place, that is the middle of the line, and did not approve of carrying the sense from one line to another. The result was that the couplet became an excellent medium for expressing aphorisms (proverbial sayings) and for satire. But at the same time it became extremely monotonous and sometimes very mechanical and jarring. It was specially unsuited for narrative and descriptive writing and hence Pope has no achievements to his credit in that field. Every line has an equal weight and value and there is no varying of the tone or that of the verbal music.

He was, however, a master of the Heroic couplet. He could not be surpassed for economy, wit and precision that distinguished his style. His favourite method was to divide the line into two parts, each balancing the other. In the form of heroic couplets he has left to the coming generations a great number of aphorisms which are very often quoted. For example, he says:

To err is human, to forgive divine. In the *Essay on Criticism* he says:

"A little knowledge is a dangerous thing." Although he had no great inspiration not any original philosophy to propound, yet he expressed many moral truths in a singularly concise and happy language. For instance,

Hope springs eternal in the human breast.
Man never is, but always to be blest.
Or,
An honest man is the noblest work of God.

Cazamian makes the following observations about his style and diction : The art of expression, very careful and minute, aim at imparting and still further intensifying the sovereign ease. It succeeds in doing so chiefly through a cadence of the language which is one with the rhythm of the verse. The heroic couplet is inseparably associated with the mastery of Pope. The effects he draws from it are less varied, of a less poetic quality than those of Dryden, but in a narrow scale they acquire an incomparable effectiveness. The Alexandrine become very rare ; the 'triplet' is exceptional ; the pauses tend to settle permanently round the centre of the line; the free circulation of ideas between the couplets is repressed by a mental preference, which has become habitual almost automatic, and which finds satisfaction in short and balanced expressions. The rhyme marks and stresses the end of the line to a much greater extent than it can be said to add an æsthetic element (*i.e.*, element of beauty), a musical touch ; or an effect of echoing repetition ; it is often poor, and at times worse than poor. Thrown out in succession by a concentrated force of energy, which lets itself go each time without ever giving itself away or spending itself, for it retains perfect self-control these lines are like glittering shafts; they have the elegance (nicety) and cold gleam of polished steel.

Q. 8. Give examples of the mock-heroic or the elements of burlesque from Pope's poem included in your selection.

Ans. *The Rape of the Lock* is a mock-heroic poem; it presents very seriously a subject that is extremely trivial and invests it with the dignity of an epic. Consequently, it

is replete with the elements of burlesque and mock-heroic descriptions. Teasing of lovers is a common affair and as Miss Arabella Fermor showed pride and coquetry to Lord Petre he was bent upon humbling her pride and he thought of a clever stratagem to achieve his end. Since the lock of hair was clipped without permission of the beautiful lady, hence it is termed as the Rape, which in itself is a mock-heroic title.

There are several examples of the burlesque, some of which are given here. The poet praises the beauty of Belinda. He calls her a beautiful nymph or fairy, whom everybody adores. She wore a white, sparkling cross on her breast which Jews might kiss and infidels adore. She does not show favours to any youthful lover, though she smiles to all, and even though she rejects them, yet she does not offend anybody. Thus, the poet describes her mood of coquetry in a fanciful manner. He further on says that she was a fairy who proved a destruction to mankind.

In her beautiful locks of hair that hung round her ivory neck, ske kept many slaves tied to the chains of her hair. Then there is a description of the power of the hair—we ensnare the birds with hairy springs ; the tresses of a beautiful girl captivate her lovers, and mighty beasts are chained to them, and the slight lines of hair surprise the fish which are caught into the net.

The baron was so much enamoured by the locks of Belinda that he invoked the help of gods, and adored all heavenly powers, especially the goddess of love, to enable him to get that lock. He even performs a ritual to pray ardently to achieve his object. He lights a sacred fire, breathes three amorous sighs as he kindled it, fell prostrate on his body and begged with ardent eyes for the fulfilment on his desire :

The pow'rs gave ear, and granted half his pray'r.
The rest the winds dispersed in empty air.

Now, all this burning passion and the all-consuming emotion is stirred up for the sake of obtaining a lock of

hair—what a great aim ! The heavens also grant half of his prayer as the rest of it had been dispersed in the atmosphere by the winds.

When the lock of hair has been cut, the nymph gave out shrieks and cry which rent the air. The poet heightens the effect by giving similes. He says that a living fire flashed from her eyes and screams of horror reached up to the skies Girls have never made louder cries than she did, even when their husbands die or their lapdogs breathe their last, or when the china vessels fall down and break into pieces. On the other hand, the victor declared that wreathes of triumph would twine round his temple. He felt that his praise for wondrous deed would be sung so long as the fish take delight in the streams and the birds in the air ; so long as the soft candles burn over beautiful girls that make promises to lovers to make assignations. All this was the work of steel, the pair of scissors which had achieved this almost impossible task. Then follows a description of the powers of steel.

Next, as the beautiful Belinda appears before the peer to beg for her lock, she is described as a perfect figure of sorrow and grief. Her eyes half-anguished, half-drowned in tears, her livid, pale cheeks, her bosom bearing sighs and her head drooping down in sadness and disgrace—make her look like the embodiment of sorrow and grief.

The crowning touch of burlesque is given by the poet in the end of this piece when he makes the lock of hair fly up to the heavens and spread in the firmament like a shooting star. Some people thought that it rose to the lunar regions. It is a place where all the lost treasures of mankind are stored, where the wits of heroes are kept in beautiful flower vases, and broken vows are stored, and alms distributed at death beds, and lovers' hearts bound by ribbons, promises of courtiers and prayers of sick men, smiles of unfaithful women, and tears of heirs. But the poet wants to convince that it did fly away thither :

But trust the Muse—she saw it upward rise.
Though marked by none but the quick poetic eyes.

Thus, the whole poem is steeped in an atmosphere of burlesque and mock-heroic descriptions.

SPENSER

(1) His Life

Edmund Spenser (1552—1599) was born in London in 1552, and was educated at the Merchant Taylor's School, and at Pembroke Hall, Cambridge. During his University studies he came under a strong Protestant influence which pervaded the campus in those days. On leaving Cambridge in 1576, Spenser went to Lancashire, his home-country, and spent the next two years in the house of the Earl of Leicester in the company of the latter's nephew, Sir Philip Sidney. The Leicesters provided Spenser with the opportunity of meeting the higher society of the day whereby he came in contact with a lady, whom he unsuccessfully loved for a couple of years. During this period he seriously began to express his emotions in the form of poetry, and in 1579 published his *Shepherd's Calendar* in which he celebrated his lady-love under the name of Rosalinde. In 1580, however, Spenser left the Leicesters and went to Ireland where he secured the post of Secretary to the newly appointed Lord-Lieutenant, Lord Grey de Wilton. The rest of his life, save for brief visits to London, he spent in Ireland where he obtained many good positions. A considerable portion of land was granted to him at the recommendation of some powerful friends at the Court who appreciated his genius and stirred him on to work. Accordingly in 1586, he fixed up his residence in the old Castle in Cork Country, Ireland,, which had become his property. Here he was visited by Sir Walter Raleigh who admired his reading of the beginning of the great poem *Faerie Queen*, and persuaded him to accompany him to London for the publication of the work. Consequently, the first three books of *Faerie Queen* were published in 1590 and won great applause. He therefore continued his great work at his residence.

Spenser at about this time (1590) began to love another lady, Elizabeth Boyle whom he ultimately married in 1594. During the period of his courtship, he wrote a series of 88 sonnets under the title *Amoretti* in which he describes the progress of his love at various stages. Its consumation, he

further relates in his *Epithalamion* accepted by common consent as the noblest wedding hymn in the English language. He visited London again in 1596 and published the second three books of *Faerie Queen.*

In the Irish rebellion which broke out in October, 1598 in Tyrone, Spenser's Castle was plundered and set on fire by an infuriated mob. He reached London, broken in health and spirits, and died in an inn in King's Street in January, 1599. He was buried in the Westminster Abbey where a memorial was afterwards erected by the famous Countess of Dorset.

(2) Spenser's Poetry

Spenser was the greatest non-dramatic poet of the age of Shakespeare which found its most natural literary expression in the drama. According to a critic, he was a poet of concious moral purposes; also of abstract thoughts rather than of embodiments. His *personae* are rather virtues, ideas, essences than living and breathing creatures of flesh and blood. As a poet, he lives and moves in a high, pure, spiritual world, wrapt in the contemplation of beauty and love, and other fair existences. "What differentiates Spenser from, say, Shakespeare the poet," writes Compton-Rickett, "is the equable calm that Pervades even his fervour. Sensitive to every phase of imagination and beauty, there is always a dreamy atmosphere about his verse. The sharp, vivid intensity of Shakespeare is not his; but he has his own particular charm............His genius is epic, not lyric, he is a story-teller, not a singer. He has something of Homer's ancient simplicity, though not the poignancy." Thus, as D. H. Lawrence remarks, the essence of his poetry is a stark directness without a shadow of lie, or a shadow of deflection anywhere.

(3) A Landmark in Literature

Spenser is considered as one of those great poets whose coming is considered as a landmark in literature on account of his work being of a permanent and continuous source of inspiration. To quote Compton-Rickett again, "Spenser has been happily the poet's Poet. In his own days he influenced

a large number of verse writers of more or less power. Cowley and Dryden at a later period testified to his inspiring influence as a literary artist; Milton paid him a warm tribute; and even Pope, whose poetic faculty is so different in kind from that of the Elizabethan, admitted to his compelling magic. The indebtedness of Keats and Tennyson is easily comprehensible; but the most significant testimony to the greatness of this romantic Puritan lies in the power he wields over versifiers so alien in imaginative vision as Drydan and Pope. The height of a mountain can never be fairly gauged till the looker-on is at a distance and can measure the relative importance of the hills before him. Lesser heights dwindle and melt into the horizon as we pass through the centuries. Spenser, like Shakespeare, still stands up sharply and distinctly against the skies, intervening hills of minor importance may have shut him off from those of us in the plain, but ascend any of our own heights—Browning, Tennyson and William Morris—and we see him at once. And even those who have never read a line of the *Faerie Queen* have met him unknown and unrecognised in *The Earthly Paradise* (by Morris). *Limitations* he had of course; the splendour of Shakespeare is beyond his grasp, and the fine austerity of Milton. But no poet in any age or clime had a richer and fuller sense of sensuous loveliness than his or a more masterly command of the resources of rhythmic music and pictorial phrasing, such as would reveal this loveliness in words."

(4) A Great Creative Spirit

That much of the vocabularistic magnificence of the romantic poets derives from spenser, is evident from his great work, the *Faerie Queen*. To quote Professor Siraj-ud-Din, "In the work of good poets of the second order, you may point to a phrase here and there, a few lines, a whole verse, a single short poem perhaps, which seems to reach the summit of poetical achievement. But Chaucer, Spenser, Milton have the creative energy of Nature herself. Where lesser poets have a dozen enduring lines, these others have thousand. In line after line, verse after verse, canto after canto you will find the same glow and gusto the same sense

of sustained power. It is the same with versification and verbal expression. Spenser's mastery of these is complete. He attains at once to perfection, and embodies all the grace and dignity of which English was capable, thus achieving a beauty of which no poet since Chaucer with the exception of Sackville, and occasionally Peele and Marlowe, had formed the dimmest conception. He is the channel through which the old wealth of the English language passed on to Milton and later poets. Poet after poet quarried in the rich ore of Spenser's vocabulary and drew thence not only actual words and phrases, many of which in time became more or less stereotyped, but also the models in accordance with which he learnt some times to form new words, but more frequently to shape new expressions of a certain type for himself."

Spenser set out to purify Petrachism of earthly accretions. He would present it as the desire to enjoy beauty, as in its best spiritual teaching. Such Petrach had meant it to be, he reasoned. But unlike Petrach, Spenser believed love of body and love of soul were not antithetical. That was his thesis. Instead of depicting the old, old conflict between flesh and spirit, Spenser's aim was to reconcile them. In the *Epithalamion* we find a union of the luscious and the auster. This poem is the greatest spousal hymn in the English language. It has frequently between classified as Spenser's highest achievement and no one can deny its lyrical rapture. The classical allusions and the suggestion of Greek form do not detract from the loftiness of its tone; in this hymn Spenser probably comes nearest to the quality of sublimity. The *Epithalamion* is addressed to Elizabeth Boyle whom Spenser married on June 11, 1594 after a prolonged Courtship.

1. JANUARY ECLOGUE

(1) Introduction

The poem *January Eclogue* has been taken from Spenser's most praise-worthy poetical composition of Shepherd Calendar, that was published in 1579.

It reflects the spirit of youthfulness which characterised his age eager for strange lands. The poet himself is in the garb of Colin Clout. The poet expresses his own personal griefs. The intensity of January (winter) and its clamities. He is an ardent lover of beauty, but all the spring charmings are fadded in winter which is disapproved by the poet.

(2) Substance

Colin Clout is a shepherd's boy, complaineth him of his unfortunate love, being but newly (as seemeth) enamoured of a country lass called Rosalind : with which strong affection being very sore travailed, he compareth careful case to the sad season of the year, to the frosty ground, to the frozen trees, and to his own winter beaten flock. And lastly, finding himself robbed of all former pleasance and delights, he break his pipe in pieces, and casteth himself to the ground.

(3) Notes

Stanza 1. *Colin Clout*—the name of the shepherd. *Spite*—grudge ; lasting ill will. *Befall*—fall ar happen to. *Wox*—Wax, means weak. *Unneathes*—to take out, drive. *Wan*—faint, sickly. *couth*—coldly.

Stanza 3. *Daleful ditty*—a song full of grief. *Pan*—Greek god of pastures. *Plight*—condition.

Stanza 4. *Art made a mirror*—the sad tune of my pipe is the reflection of my innermost. *Whilom*—once. *Hasted*—quickness, speed. *Mantle*—covering, cloak. *Stours*—battle, assault. *Baleful*—full evil, destructive.

Stanza 6. *Moss*—family of flowerless plants with branching stems and narrow.

Stanza 7. *Icicle*—tapering piece of ice formed by the freezing of dropping water. *Dreary*—gloomy, cheerless.

Stanza 8. *Fleece*—coat of wool shorn from a sheep at one time. *Forlorn*—wretched.

Stanza 9. *Ele*—likewise, in addition to. *Sithe*—time. *Bane*—destruction, death. *Breed*—bring forth. *Feign*—to imagine.

Stanza 10. *Disdain*—to reject as unsuitable. *Kid*—a young goat, a bundle of sticks. *Cracknel*– light. *His Clownish gift*—Virgil's song.

Stanza 11. *Wain*—carry.

Stanza 13. *Over hail*—overhaul. *Pheabus*—the Sun god. Welked.

(4) Paraphrase

Stanza 1. A shepherd's boy, it will be better not to mention the word shepherd here. Anyhow when the cruel and unpleasing season was over and sun began to shine as it had been rared the shapherd led his flock (herd of cattle) that had been restrained for a long time due to the intensity of winter. Due to the long absent of the sun they had to be kept in that made them weak and feeble but now they had been driven up to the hills and plains.

Stanza 2. In the eye of the shepherd they were very pale, sick that gave him pain. It seemed as he had great love with his sheep. The shepherd cared for the betterment of the weary and unhealthy sheep.

He broken heartedly took his pipe and once again arranged the appealing tune of his pipe. He, then followed his weak and half dead flock to the plain and while his sheep fed themselves he play-d his sad tune.

Stanza 3. If there any god of love exists, then he should have pitty upon the sorrows of the lover. Oh, god just look down upon the misery world's of poor, from where you are enjoying yourself. Just open your ear to

hear the songs of grief by a young shepherd, to whom you once loved. Console and cure the griefs that have been allotted to me.

Stanza 4. The fertile land had turned to barren due to the clamaties of winter. My sorrowful song is the reflection of my inner most feelings which would justify you my present condition. How, once thy spring came after the speedy proud summer. In the spring how the dazzling daffodils felt delight. But unfrotunately your winter come with full of its cruelties.

Stanza 5. I have great rage against the clamaties of winter season. My blood have been cold due to intense cold and hatred against winter. Winter is a harrowful blow to me, because my youth would be destroyed and old age would prevail. Alas ! here from my spring begun and that had long been left to my.

Stanza 6. O, God just look the nacked trees, their leaves which provide comfortable shades have been fallen down, on them, not a single bird would built its net, all the green plots are seemed flowerless. Instead of flowers their buds would drop the pieces of ice. All plants and lovely flowers seemed cheerless.

Stanza 7. All leaves of the trees have been dried due to the stern cold. My flower buds have also been destroyed. The blossom plots where I used to sit in my youth and played with my pipe both met with the fatal fate (winter). And I heave sighs because before my own eyes the weaving fields the smiling flowers destroyed, and upon the naked branches the tapering pieces of ice is formed.

Stanza 8. These weak sheep who provide rough and ugly wool because their knees have been feebled due to lack of food and non co-operative weather. I myself paid much care to them. What has done is due to your ill-government. Your mighty mind have overcome by your unnecessary cares in your weak arrangement. I have totally been wretched or neglected, and I mourn over that.

Stanza 9. A thousand time I felt sorrow over my miserable condition and careful time. Sometime I wish to go the neighbour town to see it likewise. Ten thousand time I lament for the blessing sights what I had seen there. The sorrowful pains which burn in my heart for missing of the fair sight not for all but only for me because other can go to see that happy land but not I due to my cares. O, God love should be brought forth both joy and pain.

Stanza 10. This Habbinal is not the goal of my struggle where love is very cheap and is adjusted in daily suit. Its lady's song, courtiers, kids, light, early fruit are all disapproved by me. Ah feebish Habbinal all your charms and happiness are useless for me. I (Colin) would give you the Rosalind again. Here he means to say that he would introduce, the Habbinal his own love, the secred, with his lady-love.

Stanza 11. I loved the same country girl with my full passion. But now I realized why did I love to her. I have been forgotten by her. Alas why I had been betrayed by my lady love. She could not penetrate in the depth of my heart in return she disapproved my love. My country songs were considered as a thing of low standard. She hated me as if some one hates the snake. She cut jocks and passed non-appreciating remarks. These are sung by Colin (me).

Stanza 12. Here Colin (shepherd) considering himself and his pipe unable to please his lady love. Colin says the songs which please to me that are unpleasable to you. And when you wish to hear, my song then cannot please to you. Find his pipe and song uncapable to leave any effect on her heart. He brake his pipe into pieces and he laid on the ground.

Stanza 13. Slowly the sun light faded away. The Phebus (Sun god) brings himself down and the shade of the frosty night began to spread all over the land. The shepherd led his weary sheep back to his home.

The pensive boy seemed disappointed whose head was hanging downward which showed as if his mind was occupied of various sorrowful ideas. By his outward condition it is clear he would weep over his miserable condition.

(5) Critical Appreciation

The poem that established Spenser's reputation as a poet was the *The Shepherd Calendar* published in 1579. It was dedicated to Sir Phylip Sidney. Sidney gave this poem high praise, though he objected to the adoptation of a rustic language for the embodiment of refined ideas. *Shepherd Calender* is full of rustic language though old words are found in everywhere in the poem yet used sparingly and make the style grave. Though the subject matter of the poem deals with the rustic life but very beautifully expressed by Spenser with musical words.

Before undertaking the writing this poem Spenser had deeply studied the pastoral tradition of the time. In the theme of love he copied the style of Greek and Latin. According to the old poets like Bion and Virgil, he delt with the complaint of Colin of his disappointment in love. He glorifies this poem by enriching the significance of each image weighing it with symbolic meanings. The two craftmanship of Spenser's style lies hidden in the ceaseless efforts which he performed in his subject matter. Spenser could well be distinguished between the personal and impersonal style in a poet's work, and realising this impersonal elements in great poetry he deliberately set himself to acquire it. As Milton, Pope, Keats, Shelley and Droughty did after him, and as suggested largely through him.

In *Shepherd Calendar*, which is one of the most praised poem of his work, he is himself presented by Colin Clout ; his friend and teacher, Gabriel Harvey by Habbinal ; the woman he loved during his visit to Lancashire by Rosalind and other personalities by other characters.

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2. EPITHALAMION

(1) Introduction

Epithalamion is one of the masterpieces of Spenser's poems. This poem consists upon twenty-four stanzas, but in our Text the first thirteen as well as the last 24th has been excluded. The poem is a wedding gift offered by the poet to his lady love in place of ornament.

In Ireland Spenser fell in love with Elizabeth Boyle. He was passionate in love; in the poem he expresses full joyous of his wedding ceremony and offered this poem to his bride. After the formal invocation in which other of Spenser's works are alluded. The first ten stanzas reveals the procession of the bride with gathering of the attendants expressing the admiration for the bride, the two stanzas are for the ceremony itself.

Ten stanzas show the state of arrival at home, celebration and ultimately to the retirement of the bridal chamber. The poem lasts with a prayer for the fruitfulness of the marriage.

(2) Summary

The marriage ceremony is over and the bride came to the house of bridegroom. The guests are entertained with delicious dishes and wine not in small quantity but with full luxuries. The maids and young men of the town sing and dance with full thrill. According to the bride and bridegroom this was the holy time which ever they experienced in their life. The poet complains against the length of the day. He desires to the approach of the night. He suggests the young men of the town to ring bells. So the long day may wear away soon. Poet requests the sun god to finish your journey and go to the West as your horses need rest. He longs for night when stars would twinkle from the east and their twinkling would equally be the smiling of this marry occasion. Oh, beautiful maidens close your games and dance as the night is fast approaching. So bring the bride in her bridal bed which has been prepared so nicely that it has no match. My love would lie

like Maia of Jupiter's love. The poet welcomes the long expected night when the poet will be in the company of his bride peacefully unaware of his surrounding like heaven. The poet desires to have perfect peace without the disturbance of any bad evils like dreadful dreams and so on. All kind of sound should be stopped so that sacred peace may reign.

It is you, Cynthia, who is peeping through my window. You must not feel jealousy over my dareness with my love. Remember goddess once you have been in love with Endymion (god in Greek mythology). The poet prays the Juno, the wife of Jupiter and Hymen to bless them today. He further prays all the gods of Olympus to give them unending blessing.

(3) Critical Appreciation

Epithalamion holds a unique place among the rest of Spenser's poems by the sheer eloquence of its passion, its concentrated effect and the mastery of rhythmical and musical effect. Spenser composed this poem as the wedding gift to his lady love in place of ornament. He used all the Elizabethan lyric to decorate his love song. The Elizabethan poet laid much care to commemorate their love songs. The poem is adorned with description of natural beauty. He brought all sources to celebrate his marriage ceremony from natural sights as well as from the Greek mythology. The description of the bridal chamber is marvellous.

In the beginning of the poem we have an invocation to the Muses, whom Spenser loved to honour and usually invoked when celebrating any noble or illustrious name.

He seeks aid to all gods of Olympus and muses to bless him on this happy occasion.

The poem proceeds systematically. One stanza has an essential link with the other. By this way the epic never loses the charm and the unity of subject matter. Not a description here in this poem is out of place, not simile is introduced without any bearing to the occasion nor a god or goddess is invoked in vain. The poem reveals the universal truth.

His ideas are glowing throughout the poem and enriching the theme of the poem. It is indeed the unique achievement of the poem that for all the artifice lavished upon it. Spenser is the master in cultivating the ever lasting effect upon the hearts of the reader. He wrote this poem by having the idea to make it immortal.

(4) Central Idea

The Epithalamion is a Marriage song, the event of the poet's marriage with Elizabeth Boyle inspired this poem. This is the finest of all his minor poems and by common consent, the noblest wedding hymn in the language. Spenser wrote this poem as a wedding gift, *a song made in lieu of many Ornaments* for the bride he had woed in the *sonnets of Amoretti*, and he drew upon all the decorative resources of the Elizabethan lyric for its composition.

(5) Paraphrase

Stanza 1. *Paraphrase*. Now that the wedding ceremony is over, bring home the bride, the memento of our victory, with joy and with her bridegroom who is the glory of her gain. I am sure that no man had ever such a more joyful day than this with the blessings of heaven on him. Make arrangements for a splendid wedding feast to celebrate this longest day which is bound to be holy for ever to me. Let wine be poured out for all those who desire it, by the bellyful instead of by small cups and that walls and posts be sprinlked with wine so that they too may sweat and be drunk as well. God Bacchus, you crown yourself with a coronal while Hymen crowns himself with wreaths of vine and let the Graces dance for the rest of the time for they can do it best while the maids sing their carol to which the woods shall answer and sing their echo.

Stanza 2. *Paraphrase*. You, youngmen of the town, leave your usual labours for this day and ring the bells and write it down in your dairies about the holy nature of the day so that you may remember it for ever. This day the sun is in his "Meridian tower" with Barnaby the bright from where declining slowly by degrees he loses his heat

and light till he comes behind the Crab. But it is unfortunate that today is the longest day with the shortest night flying on the winged Pegasus This day will end only very late. You, youngmen of the town, ring the bells to make this long day wear away soon, make bonfires all day and ring and dance about them so that all the woods may answer and ring back your echo.

Stanza 3. *Paraphrase.* Ah! When shall this longest and wearisome day end and lend me the longed for opporunity to be closeted with my love. How slowly Time like a snail creeps ! O sun, the fairest planet, make haste to thy western home for the tired horses of your chariot need rest. Though long the day was, at last I now see the dusk and the bright evening star with its golden crest emerging out of the east. You, fair child of beauty, the glorious lamp of love, the leader of a host of stars, the sheet-anchor of lovers through the evils of night, how cheerfully you look from above and it seems that you laugh between the twinkling light feeling happy at the merry company of many songsters who sing out of joy that all the woods answer them, and ring back their echo.

Stanza 4. *Paraphrase.* You beautiful maidens, cease your games and dances, enough of it that all the day was yours. Now the day is dead and the night is fast approaching so bring the bride to her bridal bower and lay her in her bed, all covered with lilies and violets, display fine silk curtains over her bed-chamber, spreed odoured sheets over the bed and provide the room walls with rich tapestry. Watch, how nicely my beautiful bride lies in proud humility (to show her subjugation to her husband perhaps !) like Maia who was taken away by Jupiter while she was dozing on the green meadow in Tempe after having become tired of bathing in the nearby Acidalian brook. Now that it is night you damsels it is time that you left my love alone and cease to sing your former song which the woods no more shall answer, nor ring back your echo.

Stanza 5. *Paraphrase.* Long expected night, you are welcome. I shall soon have the fruit of my day's labour

and shall no more have to bear the darts of Cupid, the god of love. Night, you enwrap my bride and me with your broad wings that no man may intrude to espy our nocturnal happiness. With your dark mantle protect us from the evil of night. Let the night be calm and quiet without any storm or tempest or sad riot causing breach of peace like that night when Jupiter shared the bed of Alcmena to whom she bore Hercules or like that night when you yourself, Night, begot Majesty to Jupiter. Let the young men and maids cease to sing and let not the woods answer them nor ring back their echo.

Stanza 6. *Paraphrase.* Let not any lamenting cries, nor sorrowful tears and sobbing be heard all night—within and without the bridal bower. Let not false whispers resulting in hidden fears disturb the gentle sleep with baseless doubt. Let not the misleading dreams, nor dreadful sights make a sudden onslaught. Let not house-fires, nor the harms of lightning ; not even Puck, nor the evil spirits ; not any mischievous witches with their charms nor any hobgoblins torment us to worry over things that do not exist. Let us be saved from the screeching noise of the owl, the sound of the stork, the sound of the ravn,the damned ghosts called up with mighty charms, the grisly vultures which make us afraid and from the unpleasant quire of frogs still croaking. Let none of these, their gloomy accents give out in unpleasant songs which the wood shall not answer, nor ring back their echo.

Stanza 7. *Paraphrase.* Let still silence be the keeper of the night so that sacred peace may reign supreme and timely sleep, at the proper time may pour forth his limbs on your pleasant plains while loves like many feathered doves shall fly and flutter round about your bed and in the secret darkness, when no one can reproach, let them do their pretty act of stealth by spreading the snares to catch the little birds of delight concealed through the cover of night. You cupids, play your sports at will ! For, greedy pleasure, careless of your joys, thinks more upon her paradise of joys and then you are free to do whatever you like whether they be good or bad. All through the night

you attend to your merry play for the day will soon come and now no one does hinder you that say or sing nor will the woods now answer back to you by its echo.

Stanza 8. *Paraphrase.* Who is the person that peeps through my window? It is not Cynthia, who never sleeps but walks about high heaven all the night? O beautiful goddess do not envy to see me closeted with my lady love. You too once loved Endymion, the Latmian shepherd who won your love with a fleece of wool. Remember this and bless us now without feeling jealousy of us that our marriage shall see the fruit of it. Till such a time we shall cease to sing and the woods too shall not answer us.

Critical estimate. This is no doubt a beautiful stanza yet not fully intelligible unless we realise the two-fold meaning of Cynthia, which apart from refering to the moon, designates also the queen to whom Sir Walter Raleigh had dedicated a long poem under that title. The poet remembers his sovereign in the midst of his joys and implores her not to be angry with him for giving his heart to another virgin. He boldly recalls her love affair with Lord Leicestor and asks of her to be tolerant of lovers. But the allusion can only be "a dark conceit." Was Spenser really afraid that his queen would be offended by his marriage mistaking him for a Jibe? But by this cunning trick the poet raises himself on par with the nobility of her court. Even on his marriage he has not forgotten to play his part as a laureate devoted to the service of his Virgin Queen.

Stanza 9. *Paraphrase.* You great Juno, the wife of Jupiter, who considers the wedlock to be sanctimonious, bless us—this couple today. You domestic genius in whose gentle hand the bridal bower and genial bed remain without blemish or stain, supply us the secret pleasure of love till they bring forth the fruitful progeny and send us the timely fruit of this same night. And you fair Hebe and free Hymen grant us the above mentioned boon. Till we receive this boon we shall defer the singing of your praise.

Stanza 10. *Paraphrase.* All the gods of Olympus, which is always clothed in a splendid feast of light, you are

our guide in our difficulties in life when we grope in the darkness like blind men. You pour forth your unending blessings on us so that we raise a large posterity which may live long happily on this earth. Let their praise may reach upto heavenly abodes of blessed saints for increasing their glory and praise. So let us rest, sweet love, in hope of this fruition of our wishes and cease to sing till then.

(6) Notes and Explanations

St. 1. *Nawal*—now all. *Withal*—as well. *Bacchus*—the Roman god of wine. *Hymen*—god of marriage in Greek and Roman Mythology. ***Whom heaven.....with bless***—heaven approved this happy occasion and its blessing are found every where.

St. 2. *Barnaby*—St. Burnabas Day 11th June then the longest day. 'Barnaby bright' was a proverbial phrase for the day. *Crab*—the sun moves into the sign of Cancer, the Crab, from 21st June to 23rd July. *Ring the bell ...... away*—young people are requested to ring the bell so that the weary sun may short his journey. The poet desires the approach of night.

St. 3. *Hast thee .... Home*—here poet addresses the sun to go your home hastly in the west. *Fayre*—fairy. *Fayre childe ...... love*—(love) fairy child means the stars which glimps at night and are equal to lamp of love.

St. 4. *Proud humility*—this is an example of oxymoron, a figure of speech. *Like unto Maia ...... brooke*—according to Greek Mythology, *Maia* was one of the Pleiads, the seven daughters of Atlas; the Homeric Hymn. Hermes tells how she was visited by Zeus (Jupiter) and became the mother of Hermes. *Tempe*—the vale of Thessaly, sacred to Apollo is Spenser's introduction as is the Acidalian brook. (Acidalian brook is the fountain of the Graces in Orchomenos, Boetia, sacred to Venus or Aphrodite. Spenser deliberately shifts it to Tempe for its associations. *Mayds*—maids.

St. 5. *Lyke as when love .... groome*—Alcmena was the wife of Amphitryon in Greek legend. Zeus visited

her in her husband's likeness, miraculously extending the duration of the night. Hercules (*the Tirythian groom*) was born of the union at Tiryns. *Or like as when......begot Maiesty*—Maiestas, in Ovid is the daughter of Honour and Reverence ; but Spenser associates Maiesty as the daughter of Jove and Night. *And let them ayds ..... to sings*—the maids and youngmen of the town stop singing so poet may enjoy the company of his lady love in perfect silence.

St. 6. *Dolefull*—doubtful. *Pouke*—puck, originally a mischievous and evil goblin, later simphy playful. *Witches* —evils pirits. *Hobgoblins*—(hobgoblins) Mischievous imp. *Fray vs.*—free us, or mak us free. *Quyre*—cry.

St. 7. *Ye sonnes of Venus*—ye sons of Venus (Cupids). *Albeit*—(abeit) archaic word meaning although. *Now none .... say or sing*—now no one will disturb you for singing.

St. 8. *Cinthia*—the goddess of the Moon. (here it refers to Queen Elizabeth.) *Enuy*—envy, jealousy. *O fayrest ......enuy*—O, beautiful goddess (Cinthia) you should not feel jealousy of seeing me with my love. *The Latmian shepherd*—Endymion, in Greek legend, the shepherd of Mount Latmos ; he was loved by Selene, or Cynthia (the moon) and given immortality and eternal sleep. Keat's Endymian is a treatment of the legend. *Encline thy ...... wishfull vow*—you must cast your blessing to us and should have your goodwill for us.

St. 9. *Juno*—Juno the wife of Jupiter. *Genius*—domestic genius. *Wed lock*—long locks. *Hebe*—in Greek Mythology, goddess of Youth, daughter of Zeus and Hera. She had the power to make the old young again. *Secred*—holy. *Lovely band*—tie of marriage. *Bridal boure* (*bower*) ... . *remain* : The poet prays to Juno that our marriage happiness may not stain.

St. 10. *Guerden*—reward, recompense. *Tabernacles*—abodes. *Remayne*—remain. *And all .... remayne*. The poet prays to Olympus to guide him, so that he and his beloved may rise up to the high standard. *Tymely*—timely.

(7) Recapitulatory Questions

Q. 1. What are the general characteristics of Shepherd Calendea. Elaborate keeping the poem ***January Eclogue*** **in mind ?**

Ans. See Introduction and Critical Appreciation of the poem.

Q. 2. Spenser is Master of Pastoral description. Discuss.

Ans. Reproduce from " Introduction " and "Critical Appreciation".

Q. 3. Give a personal appraisal of ***Epithalamion*** **?**

Ans. See Critical Appreciation and elaborate the following points.

(*a*) A brief analysis. (*b*) Its form and structure. (*c*) The music and melody of the poem. (*d*) The pictorial quality of the poem. (*e*) The blending of the classical with the realistic in the poem.

Q. 4. Explain with reference to the context.
Pour out the wine..............
.........but by the belly full.

Ans. The lines are taken from Spenser's Epithalamion. In this bacchic stanza, we find the pagan mood of festival described in a relaxed mood after the rituals in the church. Here we have the banquet full of rustic profusion of wine and boundless hospitality.

The bridegroom orders for a splendid wedding feast to celebrate his wedding day. He asks his men to pour wine out, for all those who desire it, by the bellyful and sprinkle the walls and posts with wine so that they too may sweat and be drunk as well. He asks the wine god Bacchus to crown himself with a coronal while he asks Hymen, the god of Marriage to crown himself with wreaths of Vine. He asks the Graces to dance for the rest of the time for they alone can do it very well.

This brilliant passage brings out the bacchanalian revel of the wedding feast, and also reveals to us that the poet can be pagan too if he so chooses.

Q. 5. Examine the view that "Epithalamion is the culmination of Spenser's poetry."

Ans. The great Ode or Epithalamion, which closes the sonnet sequence (*Amoretti*), is without a rival. It exceeds in richness and splendour all compositions of the same kind. It is the most gorgeous jewel in the treasure-house of the Renaissance.

No poem shows better the richness of his imagination and language, drawn from all sources, ancient and modern, mythological and christian. And what insight the poem gives into the literary tastes of an age when the most pious thoughts could lightly wear a pagan garb !

The breath which fills the ample strophe and passes unabated through them all to the end, the clear light which floods each successive picture, and the fine classical structure of the whole poem, simple, luminous and inhurtable, make this Ode, Spenser's most perfect production and the lyrical triumph of the English Renaissance."—(Legouis).

3. SONNET

(1) The Poem

Spenser addressed to his lady-love Elizabeth Boyle, whom he eventually married in 1594. In this sonnet he expressed his sentiments during the various stages of his courtship and development of love, and contains the gist of his Platonic philosophy. He wrote a series of 88 sonnets under the title *Amortti*. This sonnet is one of them.

(2) Summary

Spenser married Elizabeth Boyle in June 11, 1594. To her he addressed his sonnet sequence entitled the *Amoretti*, It consists of eighty-eight sonnets. These are for the most part the conventional tributes to a lady, but they also contain in a very convenient form the gist of his Platonic philosophy. The metrical form is neither Petrarchan nor Shakespearean ; like the English sonnet, the fourteen lines are divided into three quatrain and a concluding couplet, but Spenser has linked his quatrains much after the manner of the Spenserian stanza links, so that the metrical effec· is distinctly individual.

(3) Critical Appreciation

The central idea in this sonnet is the praise of his beloved by the poet, but the mode of expression varies in every case.

There is an example of the subtle philosophy of Spenser wherein he dwells upon (a) the mortality of everything worldly and the power of the poet to immortalize the rare qualities of humanity and (b) the perishable nature of all beautiful objects except those which belong to the divine spirit of beauty and are righteous and pure to serve the physical deterioration and destruction.

(4) Paraphrase

One day, I wrote her name upon the strand, but the waves come and washed it away. Again, I wrote it with

a second hand, but the tide came and made my pains (its) prey. She said, vain (is the) man that does in vain assay so to immoralize a mortal thing. For I, like to this decay, shall myself seek my name to be wiped out likewise. Not so, quoad I, let baser things device to die in dust, but you shall live by fame. My verse shall eternize your rare virtues and write your glorious name in the heavens, where when death shall subdue all the world, our love shall live and later life (shall) renew (it).

(5) Notes and Explanation

Strand—the shore or beach of the sea. *Agayne*—again. *Tyde*—tide. *Paynes*—pains. *Pray—prey. Made my paynes his pray*—made my efforts in vain. *Vayne*—silly, mad. *Doest in vain assay*—does endeavour in vain. *Mortall*—mortal, anything liable to perish. *Selve*—self. *Lyke*—like. *Eek*—eik, besides. *Wyped*—wiped, effaced. *Lykewize*—likewise, in the same manner.

Explanation.—*One day,............wyped out lykewize.* One day, I wrote my beloved's name upon the beach at the sea, but the waves came upon its surface and washed it off. Again I wrote her name there in another way. but the tide came for the second time and wasted my labours by washing it away once again. Upon this my lady-love said : "You are a mad man, for you are trying in vain to immortalize a perishable thing, because just as my name is being washed off every time from the beach by the waves of the sea, so is my own physical body prone to decay and death, and my name apt to be wiped out of existence in the similar manner.

Quod—Quoad, to this extent. *Devize*—device, design. *Dy*—die. *Eternize*—perpetuate. *Wryte*—write. *Subdew*—subdue, conquer. *Later life renew*—will be remembered in times after our lives.

Explanation.—*Not so... ....later life renew.* I would not go to that extent", said I to my beloved. "Let worthless and lowly things die and end themselves in the dust of oblivision ; but I will make

you livè for ever in fame, for I will perpetuate the rare qualities of your character in my verses and will thereby cause your glorious name to be raised to the heaven. Thus, at the moment when Death shall conquer all other worldly things, our love alone shall survive, and we shall be remembered long after we have spent our present lives."

(6) Recapitulatory Question

Q. 1. Write short note on the Sonnet with special reference to the Sonnets included in your text-book.

Ans *Its origin.* The sonnet as a form of poetry is Italian in origin. Petrarch (1304—1374) is the well-known Italian sonneteer. The sonnet was first introduced into England by Watt and Surrey in the 16th century.

Its form or structure. The sonnet is invariably a poem of 14 lines, each line written in iambic pentameter. (Slight variations are allowed here and there). The legitimate or Italian form of the sonnet consists of two parts :—(*i*) an octave (group of 8 lines) with rhyme-scheme as a b b a a b b a the 1st, 4th, 5th, and 8th lines rhyming together and the 2nd, 3rd, 6th and 7th lines rhyming together) and (*ii*) a sestate (group of 6 lines) rhyming c d e c d e or c d c d c d. Some poets while following the Italian model so far as the love is concerned change the rhyme scheme of the sestet. Wordsworth in some of the sonnets has gone so far as to change the rhyme-scheme of the sestet as well. Thus the poets have taken liberties with the rhyme-scheme of the Italian model. Besides the sonnets which follow the Italian model, we have sonnets, chiefly by Shakespeare, which do not observe the above-mentioned rhyme-scheme. The Shakespearean sonnets consist of 12 lines rhyming a b a b c d c d e f e f and a couplet (*i.e.*, two lines rhyming with each other)—thus completing the 14 lines. Lamb termed the Shakespearean sonnet as the "Fourteener". Spenser has given us still another variety of the sonnet : a b a b, b c b c, c d c d e e. Spenser was a contemporary of Shakespeare, but the form pursued by him in his sonnets like the *Sonnets "from Amoretti"* in our book is neither Petrarchan nor Shakespearean, but distinctively Spenserian and individualistic. This is established by the manner in which he interlinks 3 quatrains and a concluding couplet.

4. INVOCATION TO THE FAERIE QUEENE

(1) Introduction

The invocation is in the beginning of the great allegorical epic Farrie Queene, in which the poet addresses to the reader that he is going to undertake such a serious and delicate subject matter for which he finds himself unfit. because this was his first experience to compose such allegorical poem. Since now he had been writing the lowly songs like Shepherd's Calendar. In the invocation, there is an explanation made by the poet to the Clio, the holy Muse of history to open his eyes so that he may look into the history of the past knights of the fairy lands, where the great Prince Arthur cast himself in great trouble for noble task. Then the poet seeks aid to the Capid and Venus. He implores him to come to his help throwing his bow aside. In the end of the invocation the poet seeks the help of her Majesty Queen Elizabeth, the bright heavenly goddess to open his eyes and to lift his ideas up to the standard of that Fairy Queen.

The Faerie Queene is an allegorical epic. The characters that have been clothed in allegory are fit to the originality.

(2) The main plot and Sub-plots

This was the conception of Spenser's great epic. The main plot of the epic is concerned with the arduous quest of Gloriana, the most glorious Fairy Queen, by Prince Arthur. Arthur had seen the Fairy Queen in a vision, and enraptured by her supreme beauty, he resolved to seek her out in the Fairyland. His adventures constitute the main plot ; and, as far as these are related to the adventures of other knights, they constitute links that bind the whole together in a composite whole. The Fairy Queen holds an aunual feast of twelve days, and on each day she sends out a knight, bidding him to relieve the distress of some suppliant or the other that comes to her to seek her aid. Each of these suppliants is the victim of some grievous evil or the other, which can be crushed only by the exercise of a corresponding virtue, embodied in a particular knight.

The adventures of each knight call for a separate book; and in the adventures of each knight, Prince Arthur (representing the all-embracing virtue of magnificence or magnanimity) has to play a very significant part, which serves to provide him with opportunities for the exercise and trial of several virtues that he possesses. Through the variety of his experience, Arthur is to attain perfection.

(3) Analysis of the Story

The First Book—Spenser begins his epic with the adventures of the first Knight, called the Knight of the Redcross, whom the Fairy Queen had deputed to relieve the distress of Lady Una, whose parents dwelt in perpetual dread of a fierce Dragon that had laid waste their whole kingdom and threatened them with death and destruction. The Knight of the Redcross, accompanied by Lady Una, proceeds on his journey to accomplish the task entrusted to him. As he was going through a wood, he finds himself before a cave. This is the cave of the monster Error, represented as a horrible creature, with the face of a woman and the hind part an adder. After much terrible fighting, the monster is killed by the Knight. This was his first adventure As he proceeded further on his journey, he met the guileful enchanter, Archimago who separates the Knight of the Redcross from Lady Una. Now separated from his Lady, the Knight proceeds on his journey; and only a short while afterwards meets a Pagan Knight, called Sansfoy who is accompanied by a lovely maiden, Duessa by name. Duessa incites Sansfoy to fight with the Knight of the Redcross. In this fight Sansfoy is killed. Duessa moves the heart of the Knight of the Redcross, and wins his love. Proceeding with this new lady, the Knight comes to a place where stood two fine shady trees that were transformed into their present shape by the magic of Duessa. These trees were once a man (called Fradubio) and a woman (called Fraelissa) in love with each other. Lady Una wanders in search of her knight. On her way she meets a lion who becomes her faithful companion. She meets, further ahead, a Pagan Knight, called Sansloy, who kills her lion and takes her captive. Duessa leads the Knight of the Redcross to the Palace of Lucifera (representing Pride), where

he fights with Sansjoy, whom he kills in the fight. Una in the meantime is rescued by a band of Fauns and Satyrs from the bloody hands of Sansloy, who attempts to violate her chastity. After his fight with Sansjoy, the Knight leaves Lucifera's palace ; but on the way he meets the Giant Orgogolio, who subdues him in fight and throws him in a Dungeon. Una continues her search and meets the Dwarf, who had accompained the Knight of the Redcross. From this Dwarf, Una comes to know of the pitiable captivity of the Knight of the Redcross. Una meets Prince Arthur whom she implores to help her in relieving her Knight from the Giant's captivity. Prince Arthur meets the giant in a dreadful combat, and, after much fierce fighting kills him ; and liberates the Knight of the Redcross from his captivity. Prince Arthur tells Lady Una and the Knight of the Redcross the story of his birth, parentage and his vision of the Fairy Queen whom he sought day and night without rest. It is at this stage that Spenser gives an inkling of his main theme—Arthur's quest of Gloriana, the Queen of the Fairies. Prince Arthur and the Knight of the Redcross pledge mutual friendship and then part from each other. The Knight then passes from the house of Despair to that of Holiness, where he undergoes severe penance to purify himself before meeting his dreadful enemy, the fierce Dragon. His fight with the dreaded monster takes a whole canto. After a fierce battle for three days, the Knight of the Redcross kills the Dragon and relieves Una's parents from their wretched captivity. The last canto of this first book deals with feasts and rejoicing and Una's betrothal to the Knight of the Redcross. This is the story of the first book of *The Faerie Queene*.

The Second Book—The second book deals with the adventures of Sir Guyon (representing Temperance), who is entrusted with the task of destroying Acrasia, who had brought to ruin Sir Mordaunt and his ladylove, Amavia. On his way he comes to a castle, where live three sisters, Elissa, Medina and Perissa. Elissa and Perissa, the eldest and the youngest represent the two extremes of love and wantonness, whereas Medina, the middle one, represents

moderation. Here, Sir Guyon learns that the secret of virtue was moderation. Sir Guyon next meets Furor (representing Anger), whom he finds beating furiously the wretched Phaedon. He fights with Furor and, subduing him, relieves Phaedon from his distress. Later on he meets Pyrochles (representing Perturbation of mind), whom he subdues after a fierce fight. Later on Sir Guyon is beguiled by the enchantress Phaedria to her Island where he encounters Cymochles. Phaedria reconciles the two, and Sir Guyon leaves her Island. On the way he is tempted to visit the cave of Mammon, who, along with his daughter, makes an offer of all his wealth. Sir Guyon has to struggle hard against all these temptations, and coming back from that cave to the world of light he finds his senses weakened and he falls into a swoon. Pyrochles and Cymochles, finding him in such a state, attempt to despoil him of his armour. Now arrives Arthur, who prevents them from doing this. Prince Arthur and Sir Guyon visit the Castle of Lady Alma (representing Temperance) where they had to encounter a rout of savages led by Malenger. The two Knights repel this rout and subdue Malenger (who represents Malignity). Proceeding further, Sir Guyon, passing through many perilous temptations, reaches the Isle where Acrasia has her Bower of Bliss to which she tempts all those that will yield themselves to the pleasures of a sensuous life. This Bower of Bliss is one of the loveliest creations of the poet's imagination. Its ravishing beauty has an irresistible power over the heart of man. In destroying the Bower of Bliss and binding Acrasia lay the greatest victory of Temperance over the temptations of sensuous pleasures.

The Third Book—The dominant figure of the third book is not a hero but a heroine. This heroine is Lady Britomartis, the embodiment of chastity. She appears in the disguise of a male Knight, armed to the point. Her self-imposed task is to assist Scudamour in liberating Amoret from the captivity in which she was held by an enchanter. Like other Knights, she accomplishes her object in the end after encountering many perils and subduing many kinds of enemies, all devoted to defile the chastity of woman.

Chastity to Spenser does not mean the negation of the demands of love and life. Chastity to him is a positive virtue ; it implies not the rejection of a life of love, but the fullest enjoyment. If means unflinching loyalty to the object of love. Britomart represents this kind of chastity, of which true love is an essential element.

Spenser deals here with the subject of love in its various forms. Britomart, Amoret, Belphoebe, and Florimel, are all types of these various forms of love. Love works in different forms in men ; and how it may be ordered is best taught, as Selincourt observes, "in the study of its manifestation in different characters—in Arthur, who is stirred to a testless desire for noble deeds and Timias, who allows the strength of a noble passion to confuse his mind and paralyse his whole nature, in Malbecco and Braggadocchio, in whom lust is overmastered by two stronger and baser passions, greed and fear ; in the witch's son and the fisherman in whom mere animalism is uncontrolled by higher impulses ; in Sir Paridell, the accomplished seducer, who degrades the nobler qualities of a keen and subtle intellect to pander to his lust ; and in the squire of Dames the contemptible offspring of a social decadence, who delights in recording.

(4) Notes and Paraphrase

Lines 1 - 9. *Whylome*—formerly : *Muske*—disguise herself. *Weeds* - garments. *Oaten reeds*—the musical instrument of the shepherds, musical organ, (*Bansari*). *Areeds*—urges. *Blazon*—proclaim. *Moralize*—give a moral meaning to.

Gist—Spenser's address to his reader.

1. Spenser opens his poem with an address to his reader. He tells the reader that he, whose Muse till now has disguised herself in such humble garments of a shepherd (i.e. he who till now has composed only such lowly songs as those of the "*Shepherd's Calendar*") as suited the various occasions (of the songs of the several seasons in the "calendar"), is now enforced to undertake a task for which he finds himself quite unfit This task is that of changing the oaten pipes of the shepherd for the trumpets that proclaim the stern deeds of war ; that is, he has to leave aside

pastoral poetry and proceed to the composition of an epic poem celebrating the deeds of noble knights and ladies whose praises have since long remained unsung. Though he feels incapable of such a task, he is urged by the sacred Muse of song to proclaim their deeds of chivalry among the learned. His song shall celebrate fieice wars and faithful loves and shall seek to draw moral lessons from them.

Lines 10—18 *Virgin*—Clio, the muse of history. *Chief of nine*—the nine muses. *Scryne* (seryne) shrine—writing desk. *Taraquill*—Caia. Tranquill, the wife of Tarquine Priscus, the type of a noble queen. *'Briton Prince*—Prince Arthur. *Rue*—feel pity for. *Wit*—mind. *Tong*—speech.

Gist—Spenser's invocation to Clio, the muse of histons.

2. Spenser implores Clio, the holy Muse of History, to help her weak inexperienced servant to do her bidding. He prays to her to open for him her inexhaustible desk containing those secret ancient parchments in which is inscribed the history of the knights of the fairy-world and of that 'fairest' Fairy Queen whom the most noble British Prince, Arthur sought through the world and for whom he suffered so many hardships that the poet is moved with pity for his ill fortunes. [In the persons of the Fairy Queen and Prince Arthur, Spenser means to flatter indirectly Queen Elizabeth and the Earl of Leicester respectively] The poet implores the holy Muse to aid his weak intellect and quicken his dull speech.

Lines 19—27. *Impe*—offspring, child. *Venus sonne*—Cupid. *Rove*—aim. *Glorious fire*—fire of love. *Heben* : of ebony wood, to which were formerly ascribed certain poisonous properties. *Mart*—Mars, the Roman god of war. *Arraid*—dressed *Allayed*—decreased.

Gist—Spenser's invocation to Cupid, Venus and Mars.

3. Spenser now implores the help of Cupid, the dreaded offspring of Jove (Jupiter) and Venus, who shot his cruel dart so skilfully at Prince Arthur, that it kindled in his glorious heart an unquenchable fire of love for the Fairy Queen Gloriana. He implores him to lay aside his deadly bow of ebony wood and come to his aid with his gentle

mother. He importunes both Cupid and his mother Venus to come to his aid and bring with them also triumphant Mars in the mood of love and gentle mirth, after having quenched his thirst for blood in murder and destruction.

Lines 28—36. *Great Lady*—Queen Elizabeth. *Greatest Isle*—Great Britain. *Phoebus lampe*—the light of the sun. *Glorious type*—Gloriana, the Fairy Queen, the type of Elizabeth. *Argument*—subject. *Afflicted*—lowly. *Stile*—pen. *Vouchsafe*—condescend, be pleased.

Gist—Spenser's invocation to Her Glorious Majesty Queen Elizabeth, the Queen of Great Britain.

4. Spenser, in the end, implores the help of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth, the bright heavenly goddess, the mirror of grace and divine majesty and the noblest lady of the most glorious island of Great Britain whose light shines throughout the world. He implores her to illumine his weak eyes with the light of her fair beams and to raise his humble and low thoughts to the contemplation of that Fairy Queen who is the true type of Her Majesty the Glorious Queen and the subject of the poet's humble song. He implores the Queen, who is the object of love as well as of fear, to condescend to hear this song which he proposes to sing.

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5. THE FIGHT OF THE REDCROSS KNIGHT AND THE HEATHEN SANSJOY

(1) Introduction

The poem contains first seventeen stanzas from Fairy Queen Book I Canto V. Please see the Introduction to the above poem.

(2) Central Idea

In the contest with *Joylessness*, *Holiness* gains victory, but not as absolute as in the case of its fights with Error; for *Falsehood*, as depicted in the character of *Dueass*. comes to the rescue of this evil, and seeks to keep it alive. *Falsehood* now persues *Holiness* with unremitting zeal, seeking always to keep it in a state of Despondancy.

Though deprived of the guiding hand of *Truth*, *Holiness* has yet for its aid *Prudence* or *Common Sense*, as embodied in the character of the *Dwarf* that accompanies the Knight of the Red-Cross. It is this *Prudence* that warns *Holiness* against the dangers that lurk in the neighbourhood of *Pride*. It is *Prudence* that saves *Holiness* from the perils that encompass it while it has the company of *Falsehood* and the neighbourhood of *Pride* and other voices that, attend it. Taking the warning of *Prudence*, *Holiness* escapes from their snare.

(3) Notes

Stanza 1. *In with childe of glorious great intent*—is pregnant with the desire of glorious deeds. *Brood*—offspring. *Doughtie turnament*—tournament where valiant deeds were to be performed. *Still*—through out.

Stanza 2. *Orientall*—oriental, eastern, bright, shining. *Brydegrome*—bridegroom. *Deawie hayre*—dew-drenched hair. *Glistring*—sparkling, glittering. *Gloomy ayre*—dim air. *Battailous*—warlike. *Combat*—fight.

Stanza 3. *Commune hall*—common hall; here it means public hall. *Weet*—know. *Straunger*—stranger. *Minstrales*—minstrels. *Doen*—done, fought.

Stanza 4. *Sarazin*—Saracen, Pagan, Sansjoy. *Woven maile*—steel armour consisting of rings or chains. *Dainty spices*—choicest spices. *Furthest ynd*—furthest India; here it means furthest east. *Heat of corage privily*—fire of courage in their breasts. *Oth*—oath. *Bynd*—bind. *Assynd*—assigned, fixed.

Stanza 5. *Royall*—majestic. *Paled greene*—a green field surrounded by a palisade. *Canapee*—canopy. *Bloody*—red blood colour. *The lawrell girlonds*—the prize of victory.

Stanza 6. *Trompett*—(*Diminutive of* Trump) trumpet. A musical wind instrument. *Trompett sownded*—to proclaim by or as by the sound oft rumpet. *Hye*—high. *Battail*—battle, eager to fight, warlike. *Addresse*—directum, direct. *Wrestes*—wrists. *Blades*—brandish, wave. *Blesse*—sword. *Heavinesse*—indignation. *Assayle*—assail, assault, attack. *Fiercely*—savage, furiously. *Impress*—make. *Furrowes*—narrow trenches, channel. *Battred mayle*—shattered. *Yron*—iron. *Yron walles*—steel armour. *Fraile*—frail, fragile, in weak health.

Stanza 7. *Stout*—strong, sound. *Vegeance*—vindicate, punishment inflicted in return for an injury or wrong, retribution. *Threat*—terrify. *flyeth*—fly. *firie light*—dazzling light, sparks of fire. *Hewen helmets deepe*—broken helmets, (*helmets* : a piece of defensive armour for the head). *Might*—force.

Stanza 8. *Strives*—to quarrel (each other). *Gryfon seized of his pray*—(Gryfon : fabulous creature with eagle's wings and head and lion's body) having seized. *Dragon*—Mythical monster like crocodile or snake with wings and claws and breathing fire. *Ayre*—air. *Ydle*—idly. *Ravine*—pray. *Hideous*—horrible, frightful. *Smight*—strike at. *Sauce*—swoop about. *Affray*—frighten. *southsayer*—diviner ; (from divinus as foll ; to find out by inspiration, magic or intuition.) one who divines. *Vulgar telles of warres*—rustic wars. *Mortall fight*—subject to death, causing death, deadly; fatal fight.

Stanza 9. *Deadly shame*—shameful death. *Bight*—cut. *Vermell on*—bright red. *Dyde*—dyed. steeped. *Ruth*—pity. *Gazers hart*—hearts of spectators. *Grow*—much. *Gored*—bleeding. *Wyde*—wide

Stanza 10. *Paynim*—Pagan, Sansjoy. *Chaunst*—chance. *Raging yre*—furious anger. *Stygian lake*—meed. *Hyre*—reward, bribe. *German*—twin brother, having the same parents, same Germs. *Sluggish*—habitually lazy, dull. *Slake*—slacker, *After send*—and after him.

Stanza 11. Caytive—caitiff ; cowardly ; base. *Redeeme*—release. *Quit*—requited; taken back. *Reeled*—stagger, totter, hesitate. *Readie*—ready. *Twise*—twice. *Thou*—then.

Stanza 12. *Faerie*—the Fairy Knight. *Swowning dreame*—dazed state. *Quickning faith*—life giving. *Earst*—formerly. *Woxen*—had grown. *Creeping deadly cold*—creeping cold of death *Cast*—resolved. *Auengd*—revenged. *To bee*—to be. *Strake*—struck. *Stoupe*—stoop. *Cloven bee*—been cloven ; split in two

Stanza 13. *Miscreant*—infidel. *German*—brother. *Heavie*—heavy. *Clowd*—cloud. *Calls alowd*—called him aloud. *Answer non resievest*—received no answer.

Stanza 14. *Prowest*—most valiant. *Her love*—for her lover. *Bowres*—abode ; dwelling. *Deadly night*—dark death.

Stanza 15. *Sound on hie*—high sounded. *Homage*—worship, respect. *Enmity*—enemy combat.

Stanza 16. *He goeth*—He goes i. e. he went. *Seene*—tested ; skilled ; becoming. *Gree*—favour, goodwill. *Advancing*—praising. *Gay*—bright. *Chevalree*—a valour, a knight. *Glee*—joy, mirth.

Stanza 17. *Layd*—laid. *Sumptuous*—rich. *Leaches*—surgeons. *Salve*—remedy, heal. *Oyle*—oil. *Everie*—every. *Can*—began to, did. *Embolme*—balm. *Divide*—play in various notes. *To beguile* of—to divert from.

(4) Paraphrase

[The faithful Fairy Knight of the Redcross in a fair fight quells his Pagan foe ; but false Duessa saves him, and for his cure goes to Hell to seek the help of Aesculapius, the god of medicine.]

Stanza 1. The noble heart that cherishes thoughts of virtue and is inspired by a noble desire of glorious deeds, will never have ease, till it has brought forth numerous offspring of everlasting great glory. Such a restless passion for glory did all the night inspire the passionate heart of the Fairy Knight, who kept reflecting how he could win honour in that tournament through his deeds of valour. Absorbed in such thoughts, he remained awake the whole night watching for the light of the dawn.

Stanza 2. At last, the golden eastern gate of the great heaven began to open; and Phoebus, the Sun-god came forth

rejoicing like a bridegroom to his young bride, shaking his dew-drenched hair and casting his glittering beams through the dim air. When the Fairy Knight saw the dawn, he sprang up from his coach and began to equip himself with his dazzling arms; for he had to fight with that proud Pagan.

Stanza 3. And forthwith the Knight of the Redcross went into the public hall where many persons had already gathered with expectant eyes to know what end might befall the stranger knights. There were many minstrels, seeking with their melodious songs to banish sad thoughts from the mind; and many bards, that could attune their voices to the quivering chords of their harps. Besides, there were many chroniclers that could record the histories of old loves and wars fought by knights for the sake of ladies.

Stanza 4. Soon afterwards arrived there that cruel Saracen, Sansjoy, armed perfectly at all points in his chain-armour ; and looked hard at the Knight of the Redcross, who cared not a whit for the looks of any living being. They are then offered rare wines of Greece and Arabia and the choicest spices of the farthest East, to inflame the fire of courage in their breasts. In that wine, the two knights bind themselves by a solemn oath to keep the sacred appointed laws of arms

Stanza 5. At last came forth that Queen, Lucifera, renowned far and wide. With royal pomp and princely dignity, she was brought to a field enclosed with a palisade, and placed under a royal canopy, to see the deeds of valour of those two knights On the other side of the field, full in the view of all the spectators was placed Duessa ; and on a tree was hung Sansjoy's shield of blood-red colour. Both these (i.e Lady Duessa and Sansjoy's shield) were the prize of the victory for the winner of the combat.

Stanza 6. A trumpet from a high place blew a sharp piercing blast, calling the two knights fo direct themselves to the combat. They tied their bright shields about their wrists, and brandished their swords about their heads. Thus furnished with their instruments of wrath and indignation, they attacked each other with full force in their keen desire to kill : and struck so fiercely, that marks of deep channels

were made on their shattered armour ; and their steel mail appeared too frail and weak to protect them from harm.

Stanza 7. The saracen, Sansjoy, was mighty stout and strong, and struck his blows like heavy iron hammers ; for he fought for deadly revenge. The Knight of the Red-cross was fierce and full of the fire of youth ; and his repeated strokes fell like the blasts of dreaded threatening thunders, for he fought for praise and glory. Each, being struck, strikes the other ; and, being beaten, beats the other ; so that from their shields fly sparks of fire ; and their helmets cut deep bear the marks of each other's force.

Stanza 8. So the one of them fought for wrong, while the other for right. They fight furiously like a griffin and a dragon met in an aerial combat ; for when a griffin, flying through the air with his prey, meets an idly-flying fierce dragon that seeks to snatch away his prey, there often ensues a fierce fight between them. Each strikes terribly at the other, and both of them swoop about so furiously that the heavens are frightened with the commotion. The wise diviner, seeing such a strange sight, predicts to the amazed rustic wars and deadly fights.

Stanza 9. So they fought fiercely : the one (i e. Sansjoy) for wrong, and the other (i.e. the Knight of the Redcross) for right ; each seeking to bring the other to a shameful death. The cruel steel of the sword cuts their tender flesh so deep, that streams of blood flow from their bodies, steeping in red colour their arms that are long shone brightly when they had come to fight. Seeing their wide-open bleeding wounds, the hearts of the spectators were moved to much pity ; so that they began to wish that each should remain unvanquished.

Stanza 10. At last the eye of the Pagan, Sansjoy, flaming with fiery wrath, fell by chance upon the shield of his brother, hanging nearby. At the sight of this shield, his furious anger was redoubled, and he recalled the memory of his brother, imagining his spirit to be sitting and lamenting on the shore of the river Styx in Hades, while here

his shield hung to be the prize of the combat for the winner. He addressed himself and said that he was surely an idle brother, that slackened his forces to send his foe after him to meet him in Hades.

Stanza 11. Addressing the Knight of the Redcross as a base, cowardly person, Sansjoy asked him to run quickly to Hades to his brother, wandering there for long ; and release him from his torment. He asked him to go like a guilty ghost taking the message, that his brother had redeemed his shield from his dead foe. Saying this, he struck upon his helmet so furiously, that twice he staggered and seemed to fall ; and the spectators thought that the end of that well-matched fight had come ; while Duessa exclaimed loudly that she and the shield and everything were his by right of his victory.

Stanza 12. As soon as the Fairy Knight heard Duessa speaking, he began to rouse himself up from his dazed state ; and his life-giving faith, that had grown weak, shook away from his body the creeping cold of death. Then, moved to wrath with shame and for the sake of his Lady, he resolved to be revenged for all at one stroke ; and so, he struck at him with so great fury, that his blow forced his foe to stoop upon his knee : and if he had not so fallen on his knees, his body might have been cut in two.

Stanza 13. Knight of the Redcross, thereupon, called him an arrogant infidel, and asked him to bear himself his massage to his dear brother, Sansfoy, who, wandering alone, had long wanted him. The Knight asked him to go and tell his brother that his enemy had taken away his (i.e. Sansfoy's) shield, as well as that of Sansjoy. Saying this he began to raise his heavy hand high to slay him ; but strangely enough, a dark cloud enveloped Sansjoy, so that he could be seen nowhere. The fairy Knight called him aloud, but received no answer ; darkness wrapped him full well.

Stanza 14. Soon Duessa arose from her seat, ran to the Knight of the Redcross, and addressed him saying that he was surely the most valiant knight that ever a lady

chose for her lover. She asked him to mitigate the terror of his force and extinguish the flame of his bitter fury and vengeance for blood ; for, she said, the powers of hell, covering his foe with the cloud of dark death, had removed him from there to the woeful abode of Pluto ; leaving the victory with herself, the shield and glory, to him.

Stanza 15. Not yet satisfied with these words of Duessa, the Knight of the Redcross sought all about for Sansjoy to bathe his thirsty sword in the blood of his faithless enemy, who all that time lay hidden in secrecy under that dark shade. The knight stood wondering how he should have vanished from there. At last the trumpets from high sounded the blast of victory ; the heralds came running, and greeting him fairly with new victory, paid their homage to him ; and then brought to him the shield for which the combat was held.

Stanza 16. Then the Knight of the Redcross went to that sovereign Queen, Lady Lucifera ; and falling before her humbly on his knees, presented his worthy service to her. She accepted this with thanks and becoming grace, greatly praising his bright valour. She then marched to her palace, taking by her side the Knight of the Redcross,· whom all the people followed with great rajoicings, shouting and clapping their hands high over their heads ; so that the din filled all the air, and even rose to disturb the bright heaven.

Stanza 17. The Knight of the Redcross was taken home and laid in a rich cosy bed where many skilful surgeons were called to attend upon him to heal his bleeding wounds with ointments. The surgeons washed his wounds in wine and oil, and then anointed them with soothing balms. All this while sweet music was played in various notes about his bed, to lead his mind away from grief and pain, and all this while Duessa wept full sorely by his side.

6. The Historical Allegory of Faerie Queene

Besides being a moral allegory, *The Faerie Queene* of Spenser has often a topical significance. Dryden observed : 'the original of every one of his knights was then living at the court of Queen Elizabeth, and he attributed to each of them that virtue which he thought most conspicuous in them.' Spenser himself declared in his prefatory letter to Sir Walter Raleigh : 'In that Faerie Queene I mean glory in my general intention, but in particular I conceive the most excellent and glorious person of our sovereign the Queen, and her kingdom in Faerie Land.'

This does not suggest that Spenser's intention was to give portraits of Queen Elizabeth and her courtiers, his primary object was to deal with moral virtues, which he sought to embody in the characters of his own creation. Undoubtedly, in the creation of his visionary characters. Spenser could not escape the influence of the actual world around him. Many of his characters bear the likeness of real men and women, who played an important role in the political and religious events of his day. Spenser was as much a poet as a man of the world. He had a deep interest in politics and religion. He was a patriot, and a partisan. He was fired by an enthusiasm that would justify the cause of the nation and see it raised above the rest of the world. As Spenser developed his moral allegory, he could not help casting his eyes on the political and religious world around him. If Una was to represent Truth, on the one hand, she could, on the other hand, be identified with Elizabeth ; similarly, Duessa represented not only Falsehood, she could also be identified with Roman Catholicism, as well as Mary Queen of Scots.

In the allegory of *The Faerie Queene* the two worlds of historical facts and of moral and spiritual ideas blend and fuse. In the following paragraphs of this section is attempted an interpretation of the historical allegory in the first book of *The Faerie Queene*.

The Knight of the Redcross is St. George, or England as a militant spiritual force. Some critics have identified him with King Henry VII. Una, who represents Truth in

the moral allegory, is, in the religious allegory, Truth as embodied in the doctrines of the national English Church. Una's parents suggest, according to some critics, the Old and New Testaments, or the Classical and Christian Philosophy. The Dragon, which forces Una's parents to keep themselves confined within their castle, is the Antichrist. Arthur is identified with Sidney and Leicester ; Sir Calidore, with Sidney and Essex.

The fight of the Knight of the Redcross with the monster Error, represents the conflict between Protestantism and Catholicism. The books and papers vomitted by Error allude to the scurrilous pamphlets directed against Elizabeth by the Roman Catholics, and the falsehood and trickery of Duessa and Archimago practised against the Knight of the Redcross, suggest the dangers involved in a Roman Catholic reaction and plots of the Jesuits. Archimago is identified with the Pope; his designs to calumniate Una by showing her as lying in the embrace of a fair young squire, may allude to the malicious designs of those who brought the charges of adultery against Anne Boleyn, the mother of Queen Elizabeth, and a champion of Protestantism.

The plunder of the monasteries by Kirkrapine refers to their destruction. The Lion who attends upon Una and kills Kirkrapine is identified with Thomas Cromwell, the great spiritual leader and martyr, the Champion of reform and the enemy of Roman Catholicism. In Abessa, the daughter of blind Corceca, critics have discovered the likeness of Elizabeth Barton, the Nun of Kent, who drew attention to herself as the champion of the old religion.

Sansjoy is identified with Gardiner, who stood against Cromwell as the leader of the Roman Catholics. The falling of Una into his hands represents the falling of the church into the hands of Gardiner, who tried to restore Roman Catholicism and suppress Protestantism. Sansfoy, the elder brother of Sansjoy, has been identified by some critics with Thomas More and by others with Cardinal Wolsey.

Sir Satyrane, undertaking the defence of Una upon the death of the Lion, may be likened to Crammer, who took

upon him the defence of the reformed church upon the death of the Lord Protector, Oliver Cromwell.

Orgoglio represents the tyrannical power of Romanism, embodied especially in Philip of Spain, the great enemy of England and of Protestantism. Duessa, who surrenders herself to Orgoglio, represents, in all likelihood, Mary Queen of Scots, who sought to strengthen her power by marrying Prince Philip of Spain. The triple crown which Orgoglio places upon the head of Duessa, and the royal majesty with which he invests her, are suggestive of the great favours done by the Spanish King to Queen Mary.

The seven-headed monster, the dreadful Dragon that laid waste the Kingdom of Una's parents, is the type of the Antichrist, identified by certain critics with the Pope, the embodiment of the spirit of the Antichrist. The seven heads of this monster are intespreted to mean the seven Catholic countries that were the strongholds of Papacy. The final struggle of the Knight of the Redcoss with the Dragon symbolises the struggle of Protestantism against Roman Catholicism, and the victory of the Knight is indicative of the victory of Protestantism in England. Such are the historical allusions in the allegory of the first Book of *The Faerie Queene*.

In Books II, III and IV, the allusions to contemporary historical allusions are not so obvious In Upton's view, Sir Guyon and the Palmer stand for Essex and Whitgift. The incident of the bloody babe alludes, according to some critics to the rebellion of the O'Nealls in Ireland. Braggadoccio and Trompart are supposed to stand for the Duke of Anjou and Simier, Marinell for Lord Howard of Effingham, Paridell for the Earl of Westmorland, known for his loose character. Amoret and Florimel are suggested to represent certain aspects in the character of Mary Queen of Scots. The devotion of Timias to Belphoebe may suggest Raleigh's worship of Elizabeth, or Leicester's love for Elizabeth.

Recapitulatory Questions

Q 1. What was Spenser's aim in designing "*The Fearie Queene*" and how far he achieve it.

Ans. Reproduce from "his life, his poetry" with an introduction to *Faerie Queene*.

Q. 2. Write an essay on Spenser's poetic diction.

Ans. See under sub-heading No. 2-3 & 4, (specially consult "Key Questions.")

Q. 3. Spenser is Genius in epic, not lyric; he is a story-teller, not a "singer". Discuss?

Ans. A reader is generally pre-occupied with the moral purpose or allegory of *The Faerie Queene*, and often forgets that he is pre-eminently a story-teller. The critic of Spenser is after all responsible for this attitude. A critic will exhaust his powers in discussing and analysing the allegory of the poem. Spenser might have declared that it was his purpose to moralize his song, but a proportionate attention should have been paid, as has often been not paid by critics and readers, to other elements of his poetry. Why Spenser should have been directed to the use of the allegorical method is a question that cannot be settled to satisfaction. Perhaps it is temperamental with him. In his *Shepherd's Calendar*, there is always an underlying meaning. The inner meanning a reader need not neglect, but it is the story that attracts him first—and Spenser, wherever may be his pre-occupation, knows the art of story-telling. Pope was first interested in Spenser as poet by his gift of story-telling, and experienced the same thrill in reading his poetry in his old age as in his boyhood. Cowley confesses that Spenser made him a poet, and was first attracted to him by his stories; "I can tell the particular little chance that filled my head first with such chimes of verse as have since left ringing there; for I remember, when I began to read and take some pleasure in it, there was wont to lie in my mother's parlour (I know not by what accident, for she herself never in her life read any book but of devotion; but there was wont to lie Spenser's

works; this I happened to fall upon, and was infinitely delighted with the stories of knights and giants, monsters, and brave horses which I found everywhere there though my understanding had little to do with all this); and by degrees with the tinkling of the rhyme and dance of the numbers, so that I had read him all before I was old and was thus made a poet." Cowley was captivated by the story and poetry of the *Faerie Queene*, not by its allegory or moral purpose.

Let a reader bring an open mind to bear upon *The Faerie Queene*, he will be mainly taken up with the story, and his interest does not flag as he goes on He will rather be disconcerted if he is told that Spenser means something else than the story. Hazlitt suggests the right mood and the mood that is natural to reader when taking up *The Faerie Queene*—in which the poem should be read. He tells us not to mind the allegory; the allegory won't bite us nor meddle with us if we do not meddle with it. The best thing is to leave the allegory alone, and read the story as it unfolds itself before our imagination.

(Please study for special comment under heading "Spenser's Poetry" on page 234).

Q. 4. 'The eternal war of 'good and evil' that is a real theme of Spenser." Write a note on the basis of the poem in your selection?

Ans. Reproduce from the Introduction to *Faerie Queene*.

KEY QUESTIONS

Q. 1. Spenser has won the title of *"The Prince of Poets."* **Justify.**

Ans. The Poet's Poet : Spenser has been called "the Poet's Poet." There are various reasons for this. He was the first English writer who realized for himself and made others realize what poetry is. He, by the miracle of his pen, unveiled before the Elizabethans the hitherto hidden treasures of great poetical art. Englishmen needed a singer-poet and Spenser made up the deficiency. Whatever subject he writes upon, he never ceases to be a poet. "In most great poets there is a certain vein of prose, which 'crops up' from time to time." Sometimes they run ; many a time they walk ; occasionally they are seen even limping. But Spenser always runs and runs fast ; he knows no crawling. That is why the poets of the succeeding generations have felt delight in looking towards him as their poetical guide.

"No less a person than Milton declared Spenser as his 'poetical father'. Dryden and Pope, are by no means the poets of Spenserian type ; yet both of them testify their debt and their admiration...Thomson's lines in *Summer* reveal his appreciation of Spenser :

Nor shall my verse that elder bard forget,
The gentle Spenser, fancy's pleasing son."

Gray found the perusal of Spenser one of his best incentives and excitements, when he wished to cultivate the poetical mood. Among English poets, Wordsworth was perhaps one of the least susceptible to literary impression ; and yet we note with what grateful joy he submitted himself to the sweet influence of Spenser. Probably the first lines Keats wrote were headed : "In Imitation of Spenser."—It was a memorable remark by a writer that "*more poets have sprung from Spenser than all other English writers.*" Spenser securely holds one of the chief thrones of English poetry ; and around no one of English poetic Kings is there gathered a court more remarkable for its selectiveness, its culture, its devotion, and on him has been conferred by right divine

the significant title, given to him by Charles Lamb, of the 'Poet's Poet'. Spenser is not, as some poets are, the poet of a certain time of life to the exclusion of others. He may be read in childhood chiefly for his adventure, in later youth for his display of voluptuous beauty, in manhood for his ethical and historical weight, in age for all combined, and for the contrast which his bright universe of invention affords." Saintsbury, speaking about this quality of Spenser, says : "the greatest and first of the Elizabethan conductors, an impeccable master of rhythm, time, tune, this is what English poetry had wanted for nearly two hundred years and had now got."

Spenser's Poetic Style. Spenser is a great word-painter of the Elizabethan England. "His language is the Supreme achievement of Elizabethan poetic invention," remarks Pater. "Swayed by no law save that of decorum," the same critic continues, "it supplies a perfect instrument for his theme, a make-believe vernacular for a make-believe world. His delicious diction transports us to a fairy region whose inhabitants eat cakes instead of bread. The language of the streets is not for such unearthly beings." His descriptions and imagery are spectacular rather than psychological.

"*Faerie Queene* is essentially a picture gallery," says Legouis ; "Spenser is a great painter who never held brush." Spenser painted with his pen, with his words. Many stanzas of the 'Faerie Queene"; remarks the above critic, are descriptions, are tapestries and pictures. When Spenser purports to draw a person or a scene from nature, he is still inspired by the painter's method His joy in painting never flags. It is enough for Spenser's name that he was one of the master musicians and perhaps the greatest of the picture-makers, of this world. Spenser is England's poet-painter, number one.

Spenser's use of Allegory : The study of Spenser's poetry reveals that he had a natural instinct for fable and allegory. *The Faerie Queene* is an allegory and *The Shepherd's Calendar* too has allegorical meaning. The latter poem consist of twelve eclogues. An eclogue has a great scope for

allegory. "As a matter of fact, the unity of the design of *The Shepherd's Calendar* lies solely in an allegorical calendar, treated ethically, in agreement with the physical characteristics of the different months...But (i) it is misleading to gather the sense of allegory from the apparent nature of his theme. His mind did not energise within a professed subject; (ii) the true significance of Spenser's allegorical matter can only be discovered by tracking the sources of his allegorical form. His motives are artistic rather than ethical." (Cambridge History of English Literature).

The allegory in *The Faerie Queene*, except in its first two books, is obscure. He (Spenser) "lacks the simple restrained line of a good allegorist. He has not the central idea, the ardent passion or the unity of design which are essential conditions of a powerful and effective allegory... Neither as an allegorist nor as a writer of romance does he excel, but as the showman of pageants he is incomparable."

Q. 2. Spenser's poetry is best known for its pictorial quality. Descuss. (*P. U. 1970.*)

Ans. Spenser, like great artists, felt the form and pressure of his time conditioning his writing. He was aware of a desire to make English a fine language, full of magnificent words, with its roots in the older and popular traditions of the native tongue. He had the ambition to write, in English, poems which would be great and revered, as the classical epics of Homer and Vergil had been, or the new ambitious romantic poetry of Arisoto and Tasso. He was aware of the popular stories and myths, which had lingered on from the Middle Ages, the Arthurian tales, the allegories; the giants and enchanters. He knew, no less, the nobly-fashioned heroic tales from the classical world, of Hector and Achilles, Ulysies and Aeneas. Somehow he would make a poem in which the medley of native story joined with a classical ambition in presentation. His mind looked out beyond the Court to the people, to their superstitions and faiths, and he had even the grave moral aim of improving the England which he loved, but the Court and the Queen were in the forefront

of his vision. In him the medieval and Renaissance meet, the modern and the classical, the courtly and popular.

Spenser is a painter in words, perhaps the most wonderful who has ever lived. The ambition to rival painting was born in English poetry through Spenser. When he purports to draw a person or a scene from nature, he is inspired by the painter's method. He is unendingly enthralled by the human body, especially woman's body ; no one of its details wearies his patience or escapes his observation A picture in which everything was in a state of arrested motion was not his sole model. His art was at its best while describing the pageants, the processions of costumed characters and colourful situations. So much is he carried by his delight in a picture that he often half-forgets symbolical and moral meaning ; and we often contemplate his pictures not for edification or any meaning we hope to discover in them but for their perfection of form and brilliancy, of colouring. His greatest poem 'The Faerie Queene' is essentially a picture gallery. This quality of his poetry is clearly discernable in the small poem 'Prothalamion' which is filled with many images which pass before our imagination, one after the other. The beautiful picture of the Nymphs with their loose green locks and their little wicker baskets full of different flowers is succeeded by that of the two lovely swans whiter than snow on the top of Mount of Pinpus like heavenly birds. This picture in its turn is followed by one representing the Nymphs as garlanding and blessing these Fairest-birds, which so crowned are changed into brides by the poet's fancy. The scene now shifts to merry London with its bricky towers, the Inner Temple and the Earl Leicester's house occupied by the Earl of Essex. Next we see the noble Earl and the two handsome Knights coming out to receive the fair brides in anticipation of their forthcoming nuptials.

Spenser was not only one of the greatest picture-makers of the world but also one of the master musicians. If his poems unroll before our eyes innumerable dazzling visions, they also haunt our ears by the music of their unfailing

harmony. Very often the enchanting melody of his verse has a hypnotic effect, lulls the intellect and transports us from the world of reality into the kingdom of illusion. Thus the effect of his pictorial powers is enhanced by the sweetness and music of his verse. No other poet has a more masterly command of rhythmic music and pictorial painting. Thus in Spenser, poetry, music and painting combine to create the desired effect as in the following lines of requisite sweetness and celestial charm.

> There in meadow, by the river's side,
> A flock of Nymphs I chanced to spy,
> All lovely daughters of the flood thereby,
> With goodly greenish lock, all loose untied,
> As each had been a bride.

Q. 3. Write a note on Spenser's Lyricism, and his didacticism and the use of allegory on the basis of the poems in your Text-book.

Ans. Though Spenser's poetry is abundantly rich in romance and glowing descriptions of female beauty, yet he was not a petty romanticist seeking a constant sensuous gratification. As a matter of fact he took a very serious view of his poetic art and was at heart a moralist who cultivated the art of poetry for the edification of his countrymen and the inculcation of certain moral virtues among them. For this purpose he adopted the form of allegory which is, a figurative narrative conveying a veiled moral meaning. Faerie Queene, for which he has the virtuous design of making it an edifying treatise, is vast allegory in which his twelve knights stand for the twelve pirate moral virtues, King Arthur in love with Faerie Queene is magnificence, the supreme virtue which, according to Aristotle, includes, all the others. In the 1st book of the Faerie Queene, the Red Cross Knight represents a Christian in quest of truth. Thus there is a strong element of didacticism in his poetry, which finds expression through the form of allegory especially adopted for it. But the poet in him always prevails upon the preacher and both the underlying moral and the allegory are obscured and the pure poetry and romance becomes dominant. It is his heroines like

Birtomart who are really romantic creations and change allegory into romance. Though there is no moral behind the pictures presented Prothalamion, yet the description of beauty given here is perfectly chaste and also there is something like allegory in the delineation of the chaste loveliness of the two ladies described as two snow white swans fairer even than :

The snow, which doth the top of Pindus Strew,
Did never white shew,
Nor love himself, when he a swan would be,
For love of Leda.

Lyricism is also an important element of Spenser's poetry. It finds expression, in his sonnets, in which he voices his feelings without recourse to allegory. Sonnet in those days was the sole medium of dilect effusion and personal expression. These sonnets known as Amoretti Sonnets and Epithalamion are unique by their purity. They tell a story of love without sin or remorse, its varying fortunes, the lover's sighs until the day he is accepted ; and his final joy. In default of ardent passion, they have the charm of harmonious and pure atmosphere. They are bathed by a pure white light. They show better anything else the quality of Spenser which Coleridge excellently named 'Maidenliness' his love of the original in woman.

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GENERAL IMPORTANT QUESTIONS

[Answers of the following questions are fully given under their sub-heads]

Q. 1. What are characteristics of Ballad poetry? Illustrate from the poems that you have read.

Q. 2. What is a Sonnet? What are the special features of the Miltonic Sonnet?

Q. 3. Write a note any two of the following :-
(i) Allegory ; (ii) Heroic Couplet ; (iii) Pastoral Elegy.

Q. 3. Distinguish between Classicism and Romaticism in English poetry. Contrast Dryden with Pope in this respect.

Q. 4. Give brief hints of the development of classical poetry.

Q. 5. Why is Milton called the God-gifted organ voice of England? What constitutes the literary greatness of Milton?

Q. 6. What place has satire in English poetry? Give illustrations of satirical poetry from Dryden and Pope.

Q. 7. How would you distinguish between the genius of Milton and that of Dryden?

Q. 8. Wherein does the peculiarity of Dryden's genius lie? *Or* comment on Dryden as a Satirical poet.

Q. 9. What is Dryden's special contribution to English versification?

Q. 10. Compare and contrast Dryden and Pope as Satirical poets.

Q. 11. Comment on the statement: "Pope can never rise above the Crowd," and illustrate its truth from his Epistle.

Q. 12. What service did Cowper render to English poetry? What is his characteristic charm?

Q. 13. "Spenser is a poets' poet". Discuss?

Q. 14. What are the contribution of *Spenser* towards English Poetry ?

Q. 15. "The outstanding interest of Spenser lies for us rather in his influence than in his achievement".

Q. 16. Enumerate the main characteristics of classical and romantic poetry.

Ans. The following are the main characteristics of classical and romantic poetry :—

(*a*) *Classical poetry* —

(*i*) Classicism stands for "insistence on simplicity, adherence to rule, reverence for tradition, and a high standard of technique."

(*ii*) Classical poetry is "the product of intelligence playing upon the surface of life."

(*iii*) It is devoid of emotion, imagination and inspiration.

(*iv*) It appeals to the intellect rather than to the heart.

(*v*) It lacks individual emotion, brooding reflection and imaginative passion.

(*vi*) It is "a poetry of argument and criticism, of politics and personalities."

(*vii*) It main subject is the life as it is led by men and women in towns and cities.

(*viii*) No beauty of the countryside appears in the classical poetry. Nor does it deal with peasants, farmers, labourers as does the romantic poetry.

(*ix*) It displays no love for Nature or its beauties.

(*x*) It employs an artificial language of stock-words and phrases, i.e., a hackneyed diction.

(*b*) *Romantic poetry* —

(*i*) Romanticism emancipated the individual. The poet was free to assert his individuality and not to care for the artificial conventions and rules of art.

(*ii*) Romanticism encouraged poetry of passion, of inspiration, of melancholy and of sensibility.

(*iii*) It brought back into English poetry such subjects an Nature, supernaturalism, mysticism, interest in the country life, peasants, shepherds. labourers, interest in childhood, mystery and hearkening to the Middle Ages.

(*iv*) It encouraged spontaneity, foundness for new metres and simplicity of style.

Q. 17. Write a note on Milton's style.

Ans. Of all the English writers, Milton is the greatest innovator in the matter of expression. *His style is individual.* It is a unique medium forged out of various materials and marked by bold departures from the English literary usage of his own or any time. The most interesting features of Miltonic expression are those that are most clearly the result of the individual temper and the peculiar mental habit of its author.

Milton's style stands at an opposite pole to that of Shakespeare and his colleagues. Milton's language, unlike theirs, has little relish of the speech of men. His anomalies are unusual in vocabulary and construction which leads him to archaism and to the substitution of foreign idiom, particularly Latin.

In general, Milton's style may be described as almost uniquely literary and intellectual. Freighted with learning and bookish phrase, elaborate in construction, often alien in vocabulary, it achieves a uniform effect of dignity and aloofness and becomes a perfect medium for the restrained and elevated yet intensely passionate personality of its author.

Milton writes not only as a literary connoisseur but also as a scholar, appealing in his readers to a love of ordered learning like his own. A striking feature of Milton's style

in *Paradise Lost* is his use of the epic or expanded simile. He follows in this the model of Homer, Virgil and Spenser. He adopts one simile after another.

Milton's style includes, besides the vigour, items of dignity, stateliness, the organ tone, the followtng characteristics :—

(*i*) Inversion of the natural order of words and phrases ;

Them thus imploid beheld
With pithie Heav'n high King.

Also placing of a noun between two adjectives, e.g., 'temperate vapours bland.'

(*ii*) The omission of words not necessary to the scene !
............extended wide.

In circuit, undetermined, square or round.

(*iii*) Parenthesis and apposition :
Of Abhorra and phorphar, lucid streams.

(*iv*) The use of one part of speech for another : e.g., verb form as noun, 'the great consult began.'

(*v*) Archaisms and Latinisms in vocabulary : e.g.' 'wous,' 'emprise,' 'attrite.'

(*vi*) Unusual compound epithets analogous to those in Homer, e.g., 'night-warbling bird,' 'three-bolted thunder,' 'double-founted streams'.

Punjab University—1970

ENGLISH LITERATURE—PAPER (A)

Time allowed : 3 hours Maximum marks : 100

Answer any FIVE questions. All questions carry EQUAL marks

1. Explain, with reference to the context, any THREE of the following :—

   (a) I am sick to death of cleverness. Everybody is clever nowadays. You can't go anywhere without meeting clever people. The thing has become an absolute public nuisance. I wish to goodness we had a few fools left.

   (b) Her triumph was tempered by circumspection; she had still that field-mouse fear of the coulter of destiny despite fair promise, which is common among the thoughtful who have suffered early from poverty and oppression.

   (c) He caught her wrists and held them. " Oh ! shut up———you hurt me, you beastly bully, you! Oh ! how could you hurt a girl !" She kicked at his shin, weeping.

   (d) Ignorance is egotism's most effective defence against that Dr. Jekyll in us who desires perfection ; stupidity, its subtlest stratagem.

   (e) The Nietzschean would hurry the monster up, the mystic would say he did not exist, but WOTAN, wiser than either, hastens to create warriors before doom declares itself.

2. Explain the significance of the title : IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST.

3. Analyse the character of GWENDOLEN in Oscar Wilde's comedy.

4. "IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST offers sound criticism of society." Discuss.

5. Explain Livingstone's view that the habitual vision of greatness is an essential part of education.

6. Bring out the element of humour in Leacock's essay "MY TAILOR".

7. What arguments does Allan Hunter give in support of his view that the impact of Hollywood upon character is negative rather than educative ?

8. What according to Fadiman are the causes of the decline of attention in the modern age ?

9. Compare and contrast the characters of Lucetta and Elizabeth-Jane in THE MAYOR OF CASTERBRIDGE.

10. What glimpses of Wessex life do you get from THE MAYOR OF CASTERBRIDGE ?

11. In THE MAYOR OF CASTERBRIDGE, we witness a battle between man and destiny. Comment.

12. Trace the element of surprise and suspense in THE MAYOR OF CASTERBRIDGE.

13. Analyse the character of Millicent in EVELYN WAUGH's story.

14. "DUCHESS AND THE JEWELLER is a masterly study of the anguish of a love-lorn man." Discuss.

15. How did the death of Mrs. BAINES transpire and why did PHILIP blurt out the truth ? (BASEMENT ROOM).

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Punjab University—1970

ENGLISH LITERATURE—PAPER (B)

Time allowed : 3 hours Maximum marks : 100

Answer any FIVE questions. All questions carry EQUAL marks.

1. Explain the following passage with reference to the context :—

 This guest of summer,
 The temple-hunting martlet, does approve
 By his lov'd mansionary that the heaven's breath
 Smells wooingly here : no jutty, frieze,
 Buttress, nor coign of vantage, but this bird
 Hath made his pendent bed and procreant cradle :
 Where they most breed and haunt, I have observ'd
 The air is delicate.

2. Does Macbeth deserve any sympathy as a human being or will you condemn him outright as an evil character ? Elaborate your answer.

3. Are the ghosts and the witches in MACBETH real beings inhabiting our world or are they merely the products of a diseased mind or symbols of the psychological states of the mind ? Discuss.

4. Explain the following passage with reference to the context :—
 Truly, shepherd, in respect of itself, it is a good life ; but in respect that it is a shepherd's life, it is naught. In respect that it is solitary, I like it very well ; but in respect that it is private, it is a very vile life. Now, in respect it is in the fields, it pleaseth me well ; but in respect it is not in the court, it is tedius. As it is a spare life, look you, it fits my humour well ; but as there is no more plenty in it, it goes much against my stomach.

5. Draw in your own words a brief picture of the Forest of Arden and describe one of the interesting scenes set there.

6. Comment on the theme of 'Love at first sight' as presented in AS YOU LIKE IT.

7. Explain with reference to the context :—

   On that those lips had language ! Life has pass'd
   With me but roughly since I heard thee last.
   Those lips are thine—thy own sweet smiles I see,
   The same that oft in childhood solaced me ;
   Voice only fails, else, how distinct they say,
   'Grieve not my child, chase all thy fears away !'

8. Spenser's poetry is best known for its pictorial quality. Discuss.

9. Milton always writes with a high moral purpose before him. Comment.

10. Do you agree that for Dryden the poet's primary object was to delight and entertain ? Elaborate your answer.

11. Discuss Pope's poetry as criticism of life.

12. "He writes frankly and intimately about himself, his own peculiar thoughts and feelings, his likes and dislikes, his recollections of his own childhood". Examine the poetry of William Cowper in the light of this statement.

13. Explain with reference to the context :—

   Know then thyself, presume not God to scan,
   The proper study of mankind is man.
   Placed on this isthmus of a middle state,
   A being darkly wise, and rudely great.

14. Write a note on any TWO of the following :—

   (i) Allegory; (ii) Heroic Couplet; (iii) Pastoral Elegy.

15. Explain with reference to the context ;

   Crowne ye God Bacchus with a coronall,
   And Hymen also crowne with wreathes of vine,
   And let the Graces daunce vnto the rest ;
   For they can doo it best :
   The whiles the maydens doe theyr caroll sing,
   To which the woods shal answer and theyr eccho ring.

Punjab University—1971

ENGLISH Literature PAPER—A

Time allowed : 3 hours Maximum Marks : 100

Answer the Following Questions.
All Questions Carry Equal Marks.

1. Explain with reference to the context, any three of the following :

(a) I am not in fovour of this modern main for turning bad people into good people at a moment's notice. As a man sows so let him reap. You must put away your diary, Cecily.

(b) We do not expect people who have been brought up on celluloid to like anything which makes a demand on their minds, for they live chiefly on febrile sensations.

(c) Pretty my foot. All that paint and powder. You take my word for it, she'd look very different with her face washed and without a perm.

(d) Elizabeth, her eyes shining at this prespect of a change from an unbearble position, joyfully assented and the two parted at the gate of the charchyard.

(e) Unmarried ! I do not deny that is a serious blow. But after all, who has the right to cast a stone against one who has suffered ? Cannot repentance wipe out an act of folly ?

(f) All current political thought is a mixture, in varying proportions, between thought in terms of concrete realities and thought in terms of depersonified symbols and personified abstractions.

2. The Plot of Importance of Being Earnest is cleverly wrought" discuss.

OR

Analyse the character of Algernon in wild's Importance of Being Earnest.

3. What argnments does Allan Hunter gire in support of his view that the Impact of Hollywood upon character is negative rather than educative ?

OR

E.M. Forster considers democracy to be less hateful than other cantemporary forms of government reproduce the merits of democracy in the light of this essay.

4. How far do you feel that Henchard's fall is dependent on fate alone in the "Mayer of Casterbridge".

5. Critically analyse the character of the heroine of Elizabelh Bowen's story Maria ?

OR

The short story can present only one crisis one small unit of life. Illustrate from two stories in your text. ?

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Punjab University—1971

ENGLISH Literature PAPER—B

Time allowed : 3 hours Maximum Marks : 100

1. Explain with reference to the context : 24

(a) The raven himself is hoarse

That croaks the fatal entrance of Duncan
Under my battlements. Come, you spirits
That tend on mortal thoughts ! unsex me here,
And fill me from the crown to the top full
Of direst cruelty.

OR

I pull in resolution and begin
To doubt the equivocation of the fiend
That lies like truth ; 'Fear Not, till Birnam Wood
Do come to Dunsinane' ; and now a wood
Comes toward Dunsinane.

(b) All the world's a stage,
And all the men and women merely players :
They have their exits and entrances ;
And one man in his time plays many parts.

OR

Who doth ambition shun
And love to live i'the sun,
Seeking the food he eats
And pleased with what he gets,
Come hither, come hither, come hither :
Here shall be see
No enemy
But winter and rough weather.

(c) Judge not the Lord by feeble sence
But trust him for his grace :
Behind a frowning providence,
He hides a smiling face.

OR

Love is a madness which all lovers have ;
But yet 'tis sweet and pleasing so to rave :
'Tis an enchantment, where the reason's bound ;
But paradise is in the enchanted ground ;
A palace, void of envy, cares and strife ;
Where gentle hourse delude so much life.

2. Who is the greater villain, Macbeth or Lady Macbeth ? Give arguments in support of your answer. 19

OR

Discuss the role of the supernatural in MACBETH.

3. 'Sweet are the uses of adversity'. 19

Comment on this remark of Duke Senior in AS YOU LIKE IT.

OR

How does a courtier's life compare with that of a shepherd's ? Discuss with reference to AS YOU LIKE IT.

4. What kind of society is reflected in the poetry of Pope ? Describe its interests, ideals and mannerisms. 19

OR

Discuss Milton's LYCIDAS as a pastrol elegy.

5. Reproduce in your own words Red Cross Knight's fight with Sansjoy as described by Spenser in FAE RIE QUEENE. 19

OR

Critically examine Cowper's THE DIVERTING HISTORY OF JOHN GILPIN.